

Table of Contents

Translator's Preface
Translator's Introduction

INTRODUCTION

The Pursuit of Being xlvii

PART ONE

THE PROBLEM OF NOTHINGNESS

| | |
|---|----|
| Chapter One. The Origin of Negation | 3 |
| I. The Question | 3 |
| II. Negations | 6 |
| III. The Dialectical Concept of Nothingness | 12 |
| IV. The Phenomenological Concept of Nothingness | 16 |
| V. The Origin of Nothingness | 21 |
| Chapter Two. Bad Faith | 47 |
| I. Bad Faith and Falsehood | 47 |
| II. Patterns of Bad Faith | 55 |
| III. The "Faith" of Bad Faith | 67 |

PART TWO

BEING-FOR-ITSELF

| | |
|---|-----|
| Chapter One. Immediate Structures of the For-Itself | 73 |
| I. Presence to Self | 73 |
| II. The Facticity of the For-Itself | 79 |
| III. The For-Itself and the Being of Value | 84 |
| IV. The For-Itself and the Being of Possibilities | 95 |
| V. The Self and the Circuit of Selfness | 102 |
| Chapter Two. Temporality | 107 |
| I. Phenomenology of the Three Temporal Dimensions | 107 |
| II. The Ontology of Temporality | 130 |
| III. Original Temporality and Psychic Temporality: Reflection | 150 |

| | |
|---|-----|
| <i>Chapter Three. Transcendence</i> | 171 |
| I. Knowledge as a Type of Relation Between the For-Itself and the In-Itself | 172 |
| II. Determination as Negation | 180 |
| III. Quality and Quantity Potentiality, Instrumentality | 186 |
| IV. The Time of the World | 204 |
| V. Knowledge | 216 |

PART THREE

BEING-FOR-OTHERS

| | |
|---|-----|
| <i>Chapter One. The Existence of Others</i> | 221 |
| I. The Problem | 221 |
| II. The Reef of Solipsism | 223 |
| III. Husserl, Hegel, Heidegger | 233 |
| IV. The Look | 252 |
| <i>Chapter Two. The Body</i> | 303 |
| I. The Body as Being-For-Itself: Facticity | 306 |
| II. The Body-For-Others | 339 |
| III. The Third Ontological Dimension of the Body | 351 |
| <i>Chapter Three. Concrete Relations With Others</i> | 361 |
| I. First Attitude Toward Others: Love, Language, Masochism | 364 |
| II. Second Attitude Toward Others: Indifference, Desire, Hate, Sadism | 379 |
| III. "Being-With" (Mitsein) and the "We" | 413 |

PART FOUR

HAVING, DOING AND BEING

| | |
|--|-----|
| <i>Chapter One. Being and Doing: Freedom</i> | 433 |
| I. Freedom: The First Condition of Action | 433 |
| II. Freedom and Facticity: The Situation | 481 |
| III. Freedom and Responsibility | 553 |
| <i>Chapter Two. Doing and Having</i> | 557 |
| I. Existential Psychoanalysis | 557 |
| II. "Doing" and "Having" Possession | 575 |
| III. Quality as a Revelation of Being | 600 |

CONCLUSION

| | |
|--|-----|
| I. In-Itself and For-Itself: Metaphysical Implications | 617 |
| II. Ethical Implications | 625 |
| Key to Special Terminology | 629 |
| Index | 637 |

Translator's Preface

This is a translation of all of Jean-Paul Sartre's *L'Être et le Néant*. It includes those selections which in 1953 were published in a volume entitled *Existential Psychoanalysis*, but I have revised my earlier translation of these and made a number of small changes in technical terminology.

I should like to thank Mr. Forrest Williams, my colleague at the University of Colorado, who has helped me greatly in preparing this translation. Mr. Williams' excellent understanding of both Sartre's philosophy and the French language, and his generous willingness to give his time and effort have been invaluable to me.

I want also to express my appreciation to my friend, Mr. Robert O. Lehnert, who has read large sections of the book and offered many helpful suggestions and who has rendered the task more pleasant by means of stimulating discussions which we have enjoyed together.

Finally I am indebted to the University of Colorado, which through the Council on Research and Creative Work has provided funds for use in the preparation of the typescript.

In a work as long as this there are certain to be mistakes. Since I am the only one who has checked the translation in its entirety, I alone am responsible for whatever errors there may be. I hope that these may be few enough so that the work may be of benefit to those readers who prefer the ease of their own language to the accuracy of the original.

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Translator's Introduction

It has been interesting to watch existentialism run through what William James called "the classic stages of a theory's career." Any new theory, said James, first "is attacked as absurd; then it is admitted to be true, but obvious and insignificant; finally it is seen to be so important that its adversaries claim that they themselves discovered it."¹ Certainly existentialism is way beyond the first stage. As regards Jean-Paul Sartre specifically it is a long time since serious philosophers have had to waste time and energy in showing that his philosophy is more than the unhappy reactions of France to the Occupation and post-war distress. And there are signs that even the third stage has been approached. Stern, for example, while never claiming that he himself has anticipated Sartre's views, does attempt to show for each of Sartre's main ideas a source in the work of another philosopher.²

Yet critics of Sartre's works still tend to deal with them piecemeal, to limit themselves to worrying about the originality of each separate position, to weighing two isolated ideas against each other and testing them for consistency without relating them to the basic framework.³ But one can no more understand Sartre's view of freedom, for instance, without considering his peculiar description of consciousness than one can judge Plato's doctrine that knowledge is recollection without relating it to

¹ James, William. *Pragmatism. A New Name for Some Old Ways of Thinking*. New York: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1949. p. 198.

² Stern, Alfred. *Sartre. His Philosophy and Psychoanalysis*. New York: Liberal Arts Press. 1953. This list includes Nietzsche, Kafka, Salacrou, Heidegger, Croce, Marx, Hegel, Caldwell, Faulkner, Adler, Schnitzler, Malraux, Bachelard. At times Stern seems almost to imply that Sartre is guilty of wilfully concealing his source. On page 212 he says that Sartre is not eclectic. On page 166 he declares that Sartre's creative talent is feminine and needs to be inseminated and stimulated by other people!

³ The most notable exception to this statement is Francis Jeanson, who likewise deplores this tendency on the part of most of Sartre's critics. *Le problème moral et la pensée de Sartre*. Paris: Editions du Myrte. 1947.

the theory of the Ideas. What critics usually fail to see is that Sartre is one of the very few twentieth century philosophers to present us with a total system. One may at will accept or reject this system, but one is not justified in considering any of its parts in isolation from the whole. The new insights which Sartre offers us are sufficiently basic to put all of the familiar concepts in a wholly different light.

In a brief introduction I can not hope to deal with the mass of detailed evidence needed to show the full scope of Sartre's thought, but I should like to do two things: first, I think it would be profitable to consider briefly earlier works of Sartre's which serve as a kind of foundation for the fuller discussion in *Being and Nothingness*; second, I should like to discuss a few of the crucial problems presented in the latter work. In connection with the earlier writing, I shall be concerned only with those aspects which seem to me to be significantly connected with fundamental positions in *Being and Nothingness*; in the second part I am making no claim to presenting a full analysis or exposition of the book but merely offering some general comments as to a possible interpretation of certain central positions.

In an article called "La Transcendance de l'Ego. Esquisse d'une description phénoménologique"⁴ (1936) Sartre, while keeping within the general province of phenomenology, challenged Husserl's concept of the transcendental Ego. The article does more than to suggest some of the principal ideas of *Being and Nothingness*. It analyzes in detail certain fundamental positions which though basic in the later work are there hurriedly sketched in or even presupposed. Most important is Sartre's rejection of the primacy of the Cartesian cogito. He objects that in Descartes' formula—"I think; therefore I am"—the consciousness which says, "I am," is not actually the consciousness which thinks. (p. 92) Instead we are dealing with a secondary activity. Similarly, says Sartre, Descartes has confused spontaneous doubt, which is a consciousness, with methodical doubt, which is an act. (p. 104) When we catch a glimpse of an object, there may be a doubting consciousness of the object as uncertain. But Descartes' cogito has posited this consciousness itself as an object; the Cartesian cogito is not one with the doubting consciousness but has reflected upon it. In other words this cogito is not Descartes doubting; it is Descartes reflecting upon the doubting. "I doubt; therefore I am" is really "I am aware that I doubt; therefore I am." The Cartesian cogito is reflective, and its object is not itself but the original consciousness of doubting. The consciousness which doubted is now reflected on by the cogito but was never itself reflective; its only object is the object which it is conscious of as doubtful. These conclusions lead Sartre to establish the *pre-reflective cogito* as the primary consciousness, and in all of his later work he makes this his original point of departure.

Now it might seem at first thought that this position would involve an

⁴ In *Recherches philosophiques*. Vol. VI, 1936-1937. pp. 85-123.

infinite regress. For if the Cartesian cogito reflects not on itself but on the pre-reflective consciousness, then in order for there to be self-consciousness, it might seem that we should need a cogito for the Cartesian cogito, another for this cogito and so on *ad infinitum*. But this would be the case only if self-consciousness required that the self be posited as an object, and Sartre denies that this is so. The very nature of consciousness is such, he says, that for it, to be and to know itself are one and the same. (p. 112) Consciousness of an object is consciousness of being consciousness of an object. Thus by nature all consciousness is self-consciousness, but by this Sartre does not mean that the self is necessarily posited as an object. When I am aware of a chair, I am non-reflectively conscious of my awareness. But when I deliberately think of my awareness, this is a totally new act of consciousness; and here only am I explicitly positing my awareness or myself as an object of reflection. The pre-reflective cogito is a non-positional self-consciousness. Sartre uses the words *conscience non-positionnelle (de) soi* and puts the *de* in parentheses to show that there is no separation, no positing of the self as an object of consciousness. Similarly he speaks of it as a non-thetic self-consciousness. Thetic or positional self-consciousness is *conscience de soi* in which consciousness deliberately reflects upon its own acts and states and in so far as is possible posits itself as an object. The Cartesian cogito, of course, belongs to the second order.

In this same article Sartre lays down two fundamental principles concerning the pre-reflective consciousness which are basic in his later work. First, he follows Husserl in holding that all consciousness is consciousness of something; that is, consciousness is intentional and directive, pointing to a transcendent object other than itself. Here is the germ for Sartre's later view of man's being-in-the-world, for his "ontological proof" of the existence of a Being-in-itself which is external to consciousness. Secondly, the pre-reflective cogito is non-personal. It is not true that we can start with some such statement as "I am conscious of the chair." All that we can truthfully say at this beginning stage is that "there is (*il y a*) consciousness of the chair." The Ego (including both the "I" and the "Me") does not come into existence until the original consciousness has been made the object of reflection. Thus there is never an Ego-consciousness but only consciousness of the Ego. This is, of course, another reason for Sartre's objecting to the primacy of the Cartesian cogito, for Descartes was actually trying to prove the existence of the "I."

According to Sartre, the Ego is not in consciousness, which is utterly translucent, but in the world; and like the world it is the object of consciousness. This is not, of course, to say that the Ego is material but only that it is not a subject which in some sense manipulates or directs consciousness. Strictly speaking, we should never say "my consciousness" but rather "consciousness of me." This startling view is less extreme than

it at first appears. It does not mean that consciousness is general, a universal pan-psyche. A consciousness is even at the start particular, for the objects of which it is conscious are particular objects and not the whole universe. Thus the consciousnesses of two persons are always individual and always self-consciousnesses, but to be individual and to be self-conscious does not mean to be personal. Another way of putting it is to say that the Ego is "on the side of the psychic." (p. 106) Sartre makes a sharp distinction between the individual consciousness in its purity and psychic qualities, by which he means what is ordinarily thought of as the personality. What he calls the popular view holds that the Ego is responsible for psychic states (e.g., love, hate) and that these in turn determine our consciousness. The reality, he claims, is exactly the reverse. Consciousness determines the state, and the states constitute the Ego. For example, my immediate reaction of repulsion or attraction to someone is a consciousness. The unity which the reflective consciousness establishes between this reaction and earlier similar ones constitutes my state of love or hate. My Ego stands as the ideal unity of all of my states, qualities, and actions, but as such it is an object-pole, not a subject. It is the "flux of Consciousness constituting itself as the unity of itself." (p. 100) Thus the Ego is a "synthesis of interiority and transcendence." (p. 111) The interiority of the pre-reflective consciousness consists in the fact that for it, to know itself and to be are the same; but this pure interiority can only be lived, not contemplated. By definition pure interiority can not have an "outside." When consciousness tries to turn back upon itself and contemplate itself, it can reflect on this interiority but only by making it an object. The Ego is the interiority of consciousness when reflected upon by itself. Although it stands as an object-pole of the unreflective attitude, it appears only in the world of reflection.

Less technically we may note that the Ego stands in the same relation to all the psychic objects of consciousness as the unity called "the world" stands in relation to the physical objects of consciousness. If consciousness directs itself upon any one of its own acts or states, upon any psychic object, this points to the Ego in exactly the same way that any physical object points to "the world." Both "world" and "Ego" are transcendent objects—in reality, ideal unities. They differ however in that the psychic is dependent on consciousness and in one sense has been constituted by it whereas objects in the world are not created by consciousness. As for the "I" and the "Me," these are but two aspects of the Ego, distinguished according to their function. The "I" is the ideal unity of actions, and the "Me" that of states and qualities.

Three consequences of this position should perhaps be noted in particular, one because it is a view which Sartre later explicitly abandoned, the other two because, although merely suggested in this article, they form the basis for some of the most significant sections of *Being*

and Nothingness.

First, Sartre claims that once we put the "I" out of consciousness and into the world (in the sense that it is now the object and not the subject of consciousness) we have defeated any argument for solipsism. For while we can still say that only absolute consciousness exists as absolute, the same is not true for the personal "I." My "I" is no more certain than the "I" of other people. Later, as we shall see, Sartre rejected this as a refutation of solipsism and declared that neither my own existence nor that of the Other can be "proved" but that both are "factual necessities" which we can doubt only abstractly.

Second, Sartre believes that by taking the "I" and the "Me" out of consciousness and by viewing consciousness as absolute and non-personal, and as responsible for the constitution of Being "as a world" and of its own activities as an Ego, he has defended phenomenology against any charge that it has taken refuge from the real world in an idealism. If the Ego and the world are both objects of consciousness, if neither has created the other, then consciousness by establishing their relations to each other insures the active participation of the person in the world.

Most important of all, there are in Sartre's claim that consciousness infinitely overflows the "I" which ordinarily serves to unify it, the foundation for his view of anguish, the germ of his doctrine of "bad faith," and a basis for his belief in the absolute freedom of consciousness. "Consciousness is afraid of its own spontaneity because it feels itself to be beyond freedom." (p. 120) In other words we feel vertigo or anguish before our recognition that nothing in our own pasts or discernible personality insures our following any of our usual patterns of conduct. There is nothing to prevent consciousness from making a wholly new choice of its way of being. By means of the Ego, consciousness can partially protect itself from this freedom so limitless that it threatens the very bounds of personality. "Everything happens as if consciousness constituted the Ego as a false image of itself, as if consciousness were hypnotized by this Ego which it has established and were absorbed in it." Here undeveloped is the origin of bad faith, the possibility which consciousness possesses of wavering back and forth, demanding the privileges of a free consciousness, yet seeking refuge from the responsibilities of freedom by pretending to be concealed and confined in an already established Ego.

In *The Psychology of the Imagination*,⁵ a treatise on phenomenological psychology which was published in 1940, we find the basis for Sartre's later presentation of Nothingness. The main text of the book is concerned with the difference between imagination and perception. Sartre rejects the opinion commonly held that imagination is a vague or faded

⁵ *L'imaginaire, psychologie phénoménologique de l'imagination*. Paris: Gallimard, 1940. Quotations are from the English translation: *The Psychology of the Imagination*. New York: Philosophical Library, 1948.

perception. He points out that frequently the objects of both are the same but that what distinguishes the two is the conscious attitude toward the object. In the conclusion he raises a question of much broader significance than the problem of effecting a phenomenological description of imagination. He asks two questions: (1) "Is the imaginary function a contingent and metaphysical specification of the essence 'consciousness,' or should it rather be described as a constitutive structure of that essence?" (2) Are the necessary conditions for realizing an imaginative consciousness "the same or different from the conditions of possibility of a consciousness in general?"

Throughout the book Sartre has been stressing the fact that in imagination the object is posited either as absent, as non-existent, as existing elsewhere, or as neutralized (i.e., not posited as existing). Now in order to effect such a positing, consciousness must exercise its peculiar power of nihilation (*néantisation*). If an object is to be posited as absent or not existing, then there must be involved the ability to constitute an emptiness or nothingness with respect to it. Sartre goes further than this and says that in every act of imagination there is really a double nihilation. In this connection he makes an important distinction between being-in-the-world and being-in-the-midst-of-the-world. To be in-the-midst-of-the-world is to be one with the world as in the case of objects. But consciousness is not in-the-midst-of-the-world; it is in-the-world. This means that consciousness is inevitably involved with the world (both because we have bodies and because by definition consciousness is consciousness of a transcendent object) but that there is a separation between consciousness and the things in the world. For consciousness in its primary form, as we saw earlier, is a non-positional self-consciousness; hence if consciousness is consciousness of an object, it is consciousness of not being the object. There is, in short, a power of withdrawal in consciousness such that it can nihilate (encase with a region of non-being) the objects of which it is conscious. Imagination requires two of these nihilating acts. When we imagine, we posit a world in which an object is not present in order that we may imagine a world in which our imagined object is present. I do not imagine a tree so long as I am actually looking at one. To accomplish this imagining act, we must first be able to posit the world as a synthetic totality. This is possible only for a consciousness capable of effecting a nihilating withdrawal from the world. Then we posit the imagined object as existing somehow apart from the world, thus denying it as being part of the existing world.

Hence the imaginative act is constituting, isolating, and nihilating. It constitutes the world as a world, for before consciousness there was no "world" but only full, undifferentiated being. It then nihilates the world from a particular point of view and by a second act of nihilation isolates

the object from the world—as out-of-reach.

Once we accept this view of imagination, the answer to Sartre's two questions is clear. Obviously the conditions of possibility for an imagining consciousness are the same as for consciousness in general. Clearly the imaginary function is constitutive of the essence of consciousness. To conceive of a non-imagining consciousness is impossible. For if consciousness could not imagine, this could only be because it lacked the power of negating withdrawal which Sartre calls nihilation; and this would result in so submerging consciousness in the world that it could no longer distinguish itself from the world. "If it were possible to conceive for a moment a consciousness which does not imagine, it would have to be conceived as completely engulfed in the existent and without the possibility of grasping anything but the existent." (p. 271).

In this early book Sartre had already linked the ideas of Nothingness and freedom. "In order to imagine, consciousness must be free from all specific reality and this freedom must be able to define itself by a "being-in-the-world which is at once the constitution and the negation of the world." (p. 269) This means that consciousness must be able to effect the emergence of the "unreal." "The unreal is produced outside of the world by a consciousness which stays in the world, and it is because he is transcendently free that man can imagine." (p. 271)

In *The Emotions*⁶ (1939) Sartre again discusses consciousness' constitution and organization of the world and from a different point of view, but the underlying ideas of the total involvement of consciousness in any of its acts and its possibility of choosing freely the way in which it will relate itself to the world remain the same. As we should expect, he completely rejects the idea that emotions are forces which can sweep over one and determine consciousness and its actions. Emotion is simply a way by which consciousness chooses to live its relationship to the world. On what we might call the everyday pragmatic level of existence, our perception constitutes the world in terms of demands. We form a sort of "hodological" map of it in which pathways are traced to and among objects in accordance with the potentialities and resistances of objects in the world. Thus if I want to go out into the street, I must count on so many steps to be taken, furniture to be avoided, a door to be opened, etc. Or to put it on a non-material level, if I want to persuade someone of a course of action, I must not only plan to use language which means more or less the same to him as to me but must observe certain "rules" of intersubjective relations if I am to appeal to his reason rather than to his

⁶ *Esquisse d'une théorie des émotions*. Paris: Hermann, 1939. Quotations are from the English translation by Bernard Frechtman: *The Emotions: Outline of a Theory*. New York: Philosophical Library, 1939. I have discussed this after *The Psychology of the Imagination*, even though the latter was published a year later, because the order seemed a more natural one in terms of the material which I have chosen for consideration.

prejudice; I must approach him in terms of his experience instead of referring to what he does not know, etc. In short, the objects which I want to realize appear to me as "having to be realized" in certain ways. "The world of our desires, our needs, and our acts, appears as if it were furrowed with strict and narrow paths which lead to one or the other determined end, that is, to the appearance of a created object." (p. 57) It might be compared to a pin-ball machine in which the ball which one wants to end up at a certain defined spot must arrive there by following one of several possible paths filled with pits and barriers. All of this is an anticipation of the hierarchy of "instrumental complexes" which Sartre describes in detail in *Being and Nothingness* and which is vital to his discussion of the body, our situation—in general what he calls our "facticity" or our "being there in the world."

It is important to note that although this hodological map depends to an extent on external brute matter and is hence to a significant degree the same for all people, still it is in part dependent on a constituting consciousness. This is true first because without any consciousness there could be no such meaningful organization. But it varies in meaning also according to the object aimed at and the attitude of the consciousness regarding the object. Thus the door may be a means of access to the outside or (if locked) a protection against unwanted guests. The appearance of the environment and its organization vary according to whether I walk or drive. Finally, Sartre claims, I may choose to ignore or neglect this instrumental organization altogether, and it is here that emotion enters in. I may in a fit of temper, so to speak, refuse to pull the handle of the pin-ball machine or say that the ball reached its destination even when it went into the wrong hole or (to put an extreme case) break the glass and put the ball where I want it or state that I had never intended really to pull the handle anyway. This world with its hodological markings is difficult; and if the situation becomes too difficult, if my plans meet with utter frustration, I may seek to transform the whole character of the world which blocks me. Since I can not do so in actuality, I accomplish a parallel result by a sort of magical transformation. Emotion "is a transformation of the world. When the paths traced out become too difficult, or when we see no path, we can no longer live in so urgent and difficult a world. All the ways are barred. However, we must act. So we try to change the world, that is, to live as if the connection between things and their potentialities were not ruled by deterministic processes, but by magic." (p. 58) We construct new ways and relationships; but since we can not do this by changing the world, we change ourselves. In certain cases we may even faint, thus magically and temporarily annihilating the world by nullifying our connection with it. Even joyous emotions fall into this same pattern since in joy we try to possess all at

once and as a whole a desirable situation which if it is to be "really" experienced must be achieved slowly and in terms of instrumental organizations. In summary, emotion is a consciousness' personal relation to the world and as such can be temporarily satisfying, but it is fundamentally ineffective and transient with no direct power to affect the environment.

In the three works just considered Sartre shows clearly that he is not following very closely the line of thought laid down by Husserl and his followers although in all three, as well as in the case of *Being and Nothingness*, Sartre calls his approach phenomenological. In these examples, however, we find very little of what we have become accustomed to think of as inseparably connected with existentialism—namely, a concern with the living person and his concrete emotions of anguish, despair, nausea, and the like. Actually, until the publication of *Being and Nothingness*, Sartre's concern with men's happiness and unhappiness, their ethical problems, purposes, and conduct was expressed largely in his purely literary works. Of these the novel, *Nausea*⁷ (1937), is richest in philosophical content. In fact one might truthfully say that the only full exposition of its meaning would be the total volume of *Being and Nothingness*. But amidst the wealth of material which might serve as a sort of book of illustrations for existentialist motifs there are two things of particular significance. First there is the realization on the part of the hero, Roquentin, that Being in general and he himself in particular are *de trop*; that is, existence itself is contingent, gratuitous, unjustifiable. It is absurd in the sense that there is no reason for it, no outside purpose to give it meaning, no direction. Being is there, and outside of it—Nothing. In the passage in which this thought is especially developed we find Roquentin struggling with the idea that things overflow all the relationships and designations which he can attach to them, a view which Sartre developed later in the form of a theory of the "transphenomenality of Being." Furthermore Roquentin realizes that since he is an existent he can not escape this original contingency, this "obscene superfluity."

"We were a heap of living creatures, irritated, embarrassed at ourselves, we hadn't the slightest reason to be there, none of us; each one, confused, vaguely alarmed, felt *de trop* in relation to the others. *De trop*: it was the only relationship I could establish between these trees, these stones, these gates. In vain I tried to count the chestnut trees, to locate them by their relationship to the Velleda, to compare their height with the height of the plane trees: each of them escaped the relationship in

⁷ *La Nausée*. Paris: Gallimard. 1938. I have used with some changes the English translation by Lloyd Alexander: *Nausea*. London: New Directions. 1949.

which I tried to enclose it, isolated itself and overflowed. . . . And I—soft, weak, obscene, digesting, juggling with dismal thoughts—I, too, was *de trop*. . . . Even my death would have been *de trop*. *De trop*, my corpse, my blood on these stones, between these plants, at the back of the smiling garden. And the decomposed flesh would have been *de trop* in the earth which would receive my bones, at last; cleaned, stripped, peeled, proper and clean as teeth, it would have been *de trop*: I was *de trop* for eternity." (pp. 172-173)

This passage is echoed in *Being and Nothingness* where Sartre uses almost the same words to describe Being-in-itself.

"Being-in-itself is never either possible or impossible. It is. This is what consciousness expresses in anthropomorphic terms by saying that being is *de trop*—that is, that consciousness absolutely can not derive being from *anything*, either from another being, or from a possibility, or from a necessary law. Uncreated, without reason for being, without any connection with another being, being-in-itself is *de trop* for eternity." (p. lxviii)

In the later work Sartre sharply contrasts this unconscious being with Being-for-itself or consciousness. But the contingency which Roquentin expresses still remains in the fact that while the For-itself is free to choose its way of being, it was never able either to choose not to be, or to choose not to be free. Nor is there any meaning for its being, other than what it makes for itself.

A second important theme in the novel is the concept of nausea itself. Nausea is the "taste of my facticity," the revelation of my body to me and of the fact of my inescapable connection with Being-in-itself. In the novel Sartre is concerned primarily with the sensations accompanying Roquentin's perception that through possessing a body he partakes of the existence of things.

"The thing which was waiting was on the alert, it has pounced on me, it flows through me, I am filled with it. It's nothing: I am the Thing. Existence, liberated, detached, floods over me. I exist.

"I exist. It's sweet, so sweet, so slow. And light: you'd think it floated all by itself. It stirs. It brushes by me, melts and vanishes. Gently, gently. There is bubbling water in my mouth. I swallow. It slides down my throat, it caresses me—and now it comes up again into my mouth. For ever I shall have a little pool of whitish water in my mouth—lying low—grazing my tongue. And this pool is still me. And the tongue. And the throat is me." (p. 134)

In *Being and Nothingness* Sartre, probably fortunately, is not so much

concerned with the sensations by which our facticity is revealed to us. But the concept underlies his discussion of the body. Furthermore it is in connection with the study of facticity that he presents the most detailed analysis of the problem of freedom, for it is the limitations offered by man's connections with external being which offer the most serious threat to Sartre's view that the For-itself is absolutely free.

In *Being and Nothingness*, which as *L'Être et le Néant*⁸ appeared in France in 1943, Sartre has incorporated the views which I have mentioned here as well as a number of less important themes found in scattered short stories and essays. The basic positions have not been really changed, but they have been enriched and elaborated and worked into a systematic philosophy. The subject matter of this philosophy is as all inclusive as the title indicates, and throughout a large part of the book the treatment is fully as abstract. Yet we might also say that it is a study of the human condition; for since "man is the being by whom Nothingness comes into the world," this means that man himself is Being and Nothingness. And before he has finished, Sartre has not only considered such concrete problems as love, hate, sex, the crises of anguish, the trap of bad faith, but he has sketched in outline an approach by which we may hope to ascertain the original choice of Being by which real individuals have made themselves what they are.

The underlying plan of this comprehensive description is comparatively simple. In the *Introduction*, which is by far the most difficult part of the book, Sartre explains why we must begin with the pre-reflective consciousness, contrasts his position with that of realism and of idealism, rejects any idea of a noumenal world behind the phenomenon, and explains his own idea of the "transphenomenality of Being." He then proceeds to present his distinction between unconscious Being (Being-in-itself) and conscious Being (Being-for-itself).⁹ Obviously certain difficulties arise. In particular, since the two types are radically different and separated from another, how can they both be part of one Being?

In search of an answer Sartre in Part One focuses on the question itself—as a question—and reveals the fact that man (or the For-itself) can ask questions and can be in question for himself in his very being because of the presence in him of a Nothingness. Further examination of this Nothingness shows that Non-being is the condition of any transcendence toward Being. But how can man be his own Nothingness and be responsible for the upsurge of Nothingness into the world? We learn that Nothingness is revealed to us most fully in anguish and that man generally tries to flee this anguish, this Nothingness which he is, by means of "bad faith." The study of "bad faith" reveals to us that whereas Being-

⁸ Paris: Gallimard.

⁹ Sartre evidently got these terms from Hegel's *an-sich* and *für-sich*.

in-itself simply is, man is the being "who is what he is not and who is not what he is." In other words man continually makes himself. Instead of being, he "has to be"; his present being has meaning only in the light of the future toward which he projects himself. Thus he is not what at any instant we might want to say that he is, and he is that toward which he projects himself but which he is not yet.¹⁰ This ambiguity provides the possibility for bad faith since man may try to interpret this evanescent "is" of his as though it were the "is" of Being-in-itself, or he may fluctuate between the two.

In Part Two Sartre, using this view of the For-itself as a Nothingness and as an always future project, discusses the For-itself as a pursuit of Being in the form of selfness. This involves the questions of possibility, of value, and of temporality, all of which prove to be integrally related to the basic concept of the For-itself as an internal negation of Being-in-itself. But if the For-itself is a relation to the In-itself, even by way of negation, then we must find some sort of bridge. This bridge is knowledge, the discussion of which concludes Part Two.

Since no full presentation of knowledge is possible without consideration of the senses, we are referred to the body. Part Three begins with a discussion of the body, and we soon perceive that one of the principal characteristics of a body is that it causes me to be seen by the Other. Hence Part Three is largely devoted to the study of Being-for-others, including descriptions of concrete personal relations. Finally our discovery of our relations with others shows us that the For-itself has an outside, that while never able to coincide with the In-itself, the For-itself is nevertheless in the midst of it. And so at last in Part Four we return to the In-itself.

We are concerned with the In-itself from two fundamental points of view. First, how can we be in the midst of the In-itself without losing our freedom. Here we find the fullest exposition of Sartre's ideas on freedom and facticity. Second, we discover that our fundamental relation to Being is such that we desire to appropriate it through either action, possession, or the attempt to become one with it. Analysis of these reactions leads us to the question of our original choice of Being, and it is here that Sartre outlines for us his existential psychoanalysis. This completes the book save for the Conclusion, in which Sartre suggests various metaphysical and ethical implications which may emerge as the result of his long "pursuit of Being" and also promises us another work in which he will further develop the ethical possibilities.

Obviously the most strikingly original idea here presented, as well as the unifying motif of the entire work, is the position that consciousness

¹⁰ The general psychological consequences of this distinction between Being-for-itself and Being-in-itself I have discussed in some detail in my introduction to Jean-Paul's *Sartre's Existential Psychoanalysis*. New York: Philosophical Library, 1953.

is a Nothingness. Yet as a Nothingness it is also a revelation of Being. Aside from the paradoxical nature of this position, we are immediately puzzled as to how to relate it to the traditional theories of idealism and realism; and I think that perhaps our best approach to the whole question of the negativity of consciousness is to observe just how Sartre himself believes that he can hold a theory not open to the objections generally directed against either of the others. His philosophy is not idealism, not even Husserl's brand of idealism, as he points out, because Being in no way creates consciousness or is in any way dependent on consciousness for its existence. Being is already there, without reason or justification. It is not exhausted by any or by all of its appearances, though it is fully there in each one of its appearances. (That is, it does not serve as a sort of phenomenon with a noumenon behind it.) It always overflows whatever knowledge we have of it—just as it is presupposed by all our questions and by consciousness itself. This "transphenomenality of Being" means that the object of consciousness is always outside and transcendent, that there is forever a resistance, a limit offered to consciousness, an external something which must be taken into consideration. Nevertheless we have not substituted a realistic position for the idealistic. For without consciousness, Being does not exist either as a totality (in the sense of "the world," "the universe") or with differentiated parts. It is a fullness of existence, a plenitude which can not possibly isolate one part so as to contrast it with another, or posit a whole over against its parts, or conceive a "nothing" in opposition to which it is "everything." It is simply undifferentiated, meaningless massivity. Without consciousness there would not be a world, mountains, rivers, tables, chairs, etc.; there would be *only* Being. In this sense there is *no thing* without consciousness, but there is not *nothing*. Consciousness causes there to be things because it is itself nothing. Only through consciousness is there differentiation, meaning, and plurality for Being.

There is a tendency among some of Sartre's critics to criticize him for this view of consciousness as negativity as though it were somehow a slight to the dignity of the human being and made things more important than people. Such an objection seems unreasonable in the light of the tremendous consequences of this Nothingness. The more difficult problem, as it seems to me, is how to account for these consequences without being false to the premise that consciousness is wholly negative; that is, without making it into a very formidable something. For when Sartre speaks of a Nothingness, he means just that and is not using the word as a misleading name for a new metaphysical substance. Yet the power to effect a Nothingness, to recognize and make use of it appears to be a positivity. If this power belongs to the For-itself, are we falling into a contradiction? And if the For-itself is a Nothingness, then in what

sense is it Being?

In the Conclusion Sartre provides us with a helpful comparison by reminding us of a scientific fiction sometimes used to illustrate the physical principle of the conservation of energy.

"If, they say, a single one of the atoms which constitute the universe were annihilated, there would result a catastrophe which would extend to the entire universe, and this would be, in particular, the end of the Earth and of the solar system. This metaphor can be of use to us here. The For-itself is like a tiny nihilation which has its origin at the heart of Being; and this nihilation is sufficient to cause a total upheaval to happen to the In-itself. This upheaval is the world." (pp. 617-618)

We can see in this comparison that the For-itself has no reality except in so far as it is the nihilation of Being. It is, however, slightly qualified in that it is the nihilation of an individual, particular In-itself. It is not a general Nothingness but a particular privation, an individual Non-Being. Just as we might say, I suppose, that the catastrophe wrought by the annihilated atom would vary in character according to which atom was annihilated.

Does this mean then that we have one disintegrated Being or a clear cut case of duality with the In-itself on the one hand and the For-itself on the other? Sartre is not altogether clear on this point. He says that in formulating metaphysical hypotheses to guide us in phenomenological psychology, anthropology, and so forth, we may, as we like, keep the old being-consciousness dualism or adopt a new idea of a phenomenon which will be provided with two dimensions of being (In-itself and For-itself). But such hypotheses we may use only as the physicist may employ *ad libitum* either the wave theory or the quanta theory; that is, not with the idea that either is an exhaustive description but that it is merely an expedient hypothesis within which one may carry out experiments.

In other passages Sartre makes it clear that Being-in-itself is logically prior to Being-for-itself, that the latter is dependent on Being-in-itself, both in its origin and in its continued history. In the original nihilation the For-itself is made-to-be (*est été*) by the In-itself. Nothing external to Being caused the rupture in the self-identity of Being-in-itself. It occurred somehow in Being. Thus the For-itself would be a mere abstraction without Being, for it is nothing save the emptiness of this Being and hence is not an autonomous substance. It is *unselbständig*. (p. 619) "But as a nihilation it is; and it is in a priori unity with the In-itself." (p. 621) In an effort to make this point more clear, Sartre points out that if we tried to imagine what "there was" before a world existed, we could not properly answer "nothing" without making both the "nothing" and the "before" retroactive. That is, Nothing has no meaning without

Being, for it is that which is Other than Being. If there were somehow no Being, Nothing would concomitantly disappear. (p. 16) As the emptiness of a particular Being, every negation (by a reversal of Spinoza's famous statement) is a determination. Nothingness takes on a kind of borrowed being. In itself it is not, but it gets its efficacy concretely from Being. "Nothingness can nihilate itself only on the foundation of being; if nothingness can be given, it is neither before nor after being, nor in a general way outside of being. Nothingness lies coiled in the heart of being—like a worm." (p. 21) Thus Being-in-itself is logically prior to Being-for-itself; for the In-itself has no need of Nothingness since it is a plenitude, but the For-itself originates only by means of Being and as a rupture at the heart of Being.

Moreover the For-itself is dependent on the In-itself not only in its origin but in its continued existence. We have seen that consciousness is a revelation of Being and that this is because consciousness can make a Nothingness slip in between itself and Being or between the various parts of Being, thus bringing about a differentiation. We saw also in connection with *The Psychology of the Imagination* that this ability on the part of consciousness to separate itself from the world by a nihilation enabled it to effect the emergence of the unreal, thus to distinguish between actual and possible, between image and perception, etc. In *Being and Nothingness* Sartre develops consciousness' "revealing intuition" as being an "internal negation." An external negation is simply a distinction between two objects such that it affects neither;—e.g. the cup is not the table. But in an internal negation, which can exist only in a consciousness, the being making the negation is affected in its being. Thus consciousness perpetually negates the In-itself by realizing inwardly that it is not the In-itself; it nihilates the In-itself both as a whole and in terms of individual in-itselfs or objects. And it is by means of knowing what it is not that consciousness makes known to itself what it is. Thus again in its daily existence the For-itself is seen to depend on the In-itself. For since it is nothing but the nihilating consciousness of not being its objects, then once more its being depends upon that of its objects. For consciousness, too, negation is determination.

It is important to recall that Sartre says of man that he is "the being by whom nothingness comes into the world." He does not deny to man any connection with being. Having noticed how the For-itself is dependent on the In-itself, we can perhaps see more clearly how Sartre can both declare that the For-itself is nothing and yet treat it as if it were a subdivision of Being and devote a volume of more than seven hundred pages to a discussion of its nature and consequences. By itself the For-itself is nothing at all and is not even conceivable, just as a reflection or a shadow which would not be a reflection or shadow of anything could not be conceived. But in relation to being, by being the nothingness of a

particular being and thus deriving from the being which it nihilates a sort of marginal, dependent being, it can give a new significance to all of Being. Thus the For-itself is without any of that fullness of being which we call the In-itself, but as a nihilation it is.

Sartre summarizes this position by saying, "For consciousness there is no being except for this precise obligation to be a revealing intuition of something." (p. 618) Immediately he recognizes that this definition is closely parallel to Plato's category of the Other¹¹ as described in the *Sophist*. We note that with Plato, too, Otherness has no being except its being-other, but as Other it is. In Plato's description we note also the Other's characteristic of marginal or borrowed being, the trick of disappearing if considered by itself, its complete separation from Being at the same time that it cannot exist independently from Being. Sartre feels that Plato failed to see the logical consequence of his position, which would be that such an "otherness" could exist only in the form of consciousness. "For the only way in which the other can exist as other is to be consciousness (of) being other. Otherness is, in fact, an internal negation, and only a consciousness can be constituted as an internal negation." (618) He also criticizes Plato for having restricted both categories—"being" and "other"—to a dialectical genesis in which they are simply genera. Sartre, of course, holds that the For-itself is an individual venture and he is speaking of concrete being and living consciousness.

Sartre in his discussion of Nothingness presents a fairly detailed criticism of both Hegel's and Heidegger's concepts. Hegel he criticizes for never having got beyond the logical formulation of Non-being so as to relate it to human reality. Moreover he objects to Hegel's making the notions of Being and Non-being contemporary instead of viewing Non-being as logically dependent on Being. And he objects that Hegel has inadvertently bestowed a being upon Non-being. Heidegger, according to Sartre, has realized considerable progress by removing Being from Nothingness and by seeing both Being and Non-being as a tension of opposing forces; he is also to be commended for discussing Nothingness as a part of human experience and not merely as an abstraction. But Sartre feels that Heidegger by causing the world to be suspended in Nothingness takes away all possibility of accounting for any origin for nihilations. Also the experience of Nothingness in dread which Heidegger describes (an experience in which one feels, though one cannot intellectually know it, the slipping away of all-that-is into the Nothingness in which it is suspended)—this, Sartre says, can in no way explain the infinite little pools of Nothingness which make a part of our everyday life. It can not account for the Non-being which is involved in every question, in every negative judgment, in prohibitions, in ideas like "destruction" and

¹¹ This, of course, is not to be confused with "The Other" as Sartre generally uses it to denote other people.

"distance." Both Hegel and Heidegger, Sartre objects, have talked about Nothingness without providing a being in which this Nothingness is founded and which can establish the negations effected by this nihilating power. In short they both neglect the structure of the human mind or consciousness.

I think that Sartre has avoided the objections which he feels must be raised against Plato, Hegel, and Heidegger. In a sense one might say that his treatment of perception and imagination and knowledge all involve the old logical relationship between determination and negation, that the internal negation itself is a logical distinction.¹² But even if we grant this point, we must recognize that he is doing it in terms of the structure of the mind and not of an order effected within the products of the mind or within the world itself. Moreover he believes that the original choice of consciousness antedates logic itself, that by a pre-logical choice we decide whether or not we will confine ourselves within the rules of logic. In connection with the emotions we have seen that consciousness may, if it chooses, use its nihilating power for a complete—though ineffective and temporary—annihilation of the world. Sartre has not restricted the use of Nothingness to concepts and relations. He uses it in his discussion of anguish, which reveals considerable indebtedness to Heidegger's treatment of dread. He uses it in his discussion of ethics, where he shows that the particular dilemma of the human being stems from the fact that there is always a Nothingness between motive and act, that a motive becomes a motive only when freely constituted by the free nihilation effected by consciousness. And finally he uses it in his discussion of freedom. Consciousness is free because it is "not enough." If it were full being, then it could not be free to choose being. But since it has an insufficiency of being, since it is not one with the real world, it is free to set up those relations with being which it desires.

Thus the For-itself is a revelation of Being, an internal nihilation of Being, a relation to Being, a desire of Being, and a choice of Being.¹³ All of these it can be, only because it is not Being. There is no question about the fact that Sartre throws the whole weight of being over onto the side of the In-itself, but in terms of significance and activity it is the For-itself which is responsible for everything—even though it could not

¹² In his discussion of nihilation, especially in connection with perception and imagination, Sartre makes considerable use of the Gestalt psychology, particularly as related to the mind's treatment of "figure" and "ground."

¹³ Wilfrid Desan has worked out a detailed chart showing the relations existing between the In-itself and the For-itself in its capacity as "Nothingness of Being, revelation of Being, etc." *The Tragic Finale*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard, 1954. p. 50. Desan's book is the most detailed analysis of *Being and Nothingness* to be found in English. Although I disagree with some of his conclusions, I believe that he has attempted to see the total significance of Sartre's philosophy as well as to analyze its various parts.

be without the In-itself. While the comparison is admittedly a bit far-fetched, I can not help being reminded in this connection of Schopenhauer's Reason, which created by the Will turns back upon the Will to deny it.

As I pointed out above, Sartre criticizes Heidegger for restricting his experience of Nothingness to special crises and ignoring the host of everyday situations in which it figures. It is interesting, however, to note that Sartre, on the other hand, ignores an entire set of special experiences in which the idea of Nothingness is tremendously important; namely, the whole history of mysticism. It would be unreasonable to expect him to have written a full essay on mysticism; after all there is no room for it in his brand of existentialism. But it is a little surprising that he has not considered the subject at all, both because he is so frequently careful to provide his own explanation for phenomena generally considered religious and because there is in mystic literature much that would have been fruitful for his analysis. I think that if we but glance briefly at that part of the mystic ideal which is pertinent, we find that here, as in connection with his specific treatment of God, Sartre has either consciously or unconsciously taken those elements of experience which for the Believer are privileged, which are apart from ordinary living and which are raised to the level of an ideal goal or at least furnished with divine guarantee, and that Sartre has woven these into the everyday data of the human condition.

We may note that the mystic's use of the concept of Nothingness differs from those already mentioned in (1) applying the concept in the form of negative definition to the ultimate reality, The One; (2) presenting the loss of personality, which is a species of Nothingness, as an ideal goal; (3) giving an irrational (one might almost say sensational) cast to the whole experience. Without passing judgment on the validity of the mystic approach, we can at any rate observe that here, as with Sartre, the concept of Nothingness, while continuing to be a denial of "everything," becomes all important and heavy with consequence. One may hazard guesses as to how all of this came about. Probably here too it is in part due to observation of the logical interdependence of Being and Non-Being. If the One is to be different from all of Being, then it is *not* Being. The loss of self is probably due partly to the same cause (if we are to be one with God, then we must be not-self) as well as to a desire to escape from the responsibility for one's own being. Perhaps too, observation of the way in which the senses tend to merge with one another, to become pain or numbness if intensified too much, also the fact that sound becomes silence if carried too high or too low may have strengthened the feeling that there is an absolute surrounding Nothing-

ness which has somehow significant characteristics.¹⁴

Sartre seems to have reduced all of this to purely human data. Whereas the mystic sets up loss of the personality as a goal, Sartre begins with the non-personal consciousness. In one sense our recognition of the existence of this consciousness which transcends our Ego is still our salvation; for acceptance of one's absolute freedom is the only existence commensurate with an honest desire to exist fully as man. But the recognition comes not in ecstasy but in anguish. It is not a merging with a higher power but a realization of one's isolation, not a vision of eternity but the perception that one is wholly process, the making of a Self with which one can not be united. The mystic looks inward and learns to put away the Self and find himself united with the One; the For-itself seeks to find the Self it can never in any final sense possess. The mystic strives to surpass his being in an absolute Nothingness which is somehow fulfilling; the For-itself spends its life in a futile pursuit of Being and tries in vain to escape the nothingness which it is.

We have seen that as Nothingness the For-itself is not only the internal negation and revelation of Being but also the desire and the Choice of Being. I should like next to examine these last two aspects of the For-itself since on these levels we may see more clearly the significance of Sartre's view in relation to theology, which he attempts to supplant, and to psychology, which he would greatly modify. When we view consciousness as desire, we find the same situation which we have encountered before; that is, its essential structure is negative but the results fully positive. Here as always consciousness is consciousness of something; thus we find now that it is consciousness of its object as desirable. Desire, like value, resides neither in the outside world nor in consciousness. It is a way by which consciousness relates itself to objects of the world. Moreover just as consciousness is the revelation of particular objects on the ground of the revelation of all of Being (as the world), so the For-itself exists its specific desires on the ground of a fundamental desire of Being. Each individual desire, however trivial, has meaning only in connection with one's fundamental relation to Being (*i.e.*, one's basic choice of one's mode of being, the way in which one chooses to exist). Thus somewhat paradoxically every concrete desire (and all desires are concrete) is significant to Sartre as indicating the personal character of the individual under consideration, but it is important not by itself alone but because it points to the all pervasive irreducible desire which reveals to us the person. Sartre's view is that since the For-itself in its relation to objects is confronting the In-itself, this means that if it desires these ob-

¹⁴ I am well aware that there are many types of mysticism and that for some of them the characteristics which I have stated here would not be appropriate. I am thinking in particular of Neo-Platonism, but I believe that at least a very large proportion of other mysticism could be similarly described.

jects, it is desiring to appropriate the In-itself. In other words, it desires Being, either directly in the sense that it wants to assimilate or be assimilated with Being and become one with it, or indirectly by first possessing (having) Being in the form of the world.

There seems to me to be a slight difficulty here. For on the one hand Sartre seems to say that we can grasp the individuality of the human being by tracking down this irreducible choice. On the other hand, he says that every For-itself (with the possible exception of one which has effected an existentialist type of katharsis) basically desires to be one with the In-itself (thus gaining an absolute security and certainty, by being a self, a fullness of being) without, however, ceasing to be freely responsible for this self and without ceasing to be aware of thus founding one's own being. Clearly this desire, as Sartre says, is irrational; one can not both be beyond the need of self-foundation and be responsible for achieving it. It is both the desire of being caused (hence absolute, justified) and the desire of being the cause. In short, the ideal desired is that *Causa Sui* which we call God. Man desires to be God! The religious implications of this position we may examine later. At present we may note that if this desire is true of all or almost all persons, then it is hard to see just how the ultimate choice of Being is revelatory of the individual. At most there would seem to be but a few basic types. The answer seems to lie in the kinds of objects by which the individual chooses to work out this basic choice. In this way there is created an infinite variety of possibilities for people as we know them. In any case it may be said that the hypothesis that one's personality is reducible to the basic attitude which is assumed by the For-itself confronting the In-itself and its own lack of Being is no more a threat to the variety of personality structures than the concept of the Freudian libido or the Adlerian will to power. Sartre obviously feels that it is far less so.

It is interesting to see how Sartre's general concept of desire comes close to paralleling philosophical positions to which existentialism is basically opposed. Here as in connection with the notion of Nothingness it is perhaps best not to think that Sartre is borrowing from other systems unintentionally and then perhaps in spite of himself coinciding with them, but rather that he is giving a new interpretation of aspects of experience so basic that he can not ignore them any more than any other philosopher who would be comprehensive. There is, for example, a sense in which the Sartrean desire parallels the concept of Eros in Plato's *Symposium*. In both writers the individual desire is meaningful only in the larger context of a desire for Being. But of course the difference is striking since the Platonic Eros leads one through less important stages to the philosophical vision of absolute truth whereas Sartrean desire leads only to a non-existent ideal which is basically self-contradictory and irrational. The continued pursuit of this ideal with Sartre is a way of

trying to escape from one's self-responsibility and is definitely not man's high destiny. And here desire is positive, if at all, only on the intervening levels. As compared with Plato, Sartre's view might appear the more negative (whether true or not is, of course, another question).

If compared with Epicurus, on the other hand, Sartre's position is seen to be definitely opposed to a philosophy which advocated the repression of all but the most moderate desires. Ataraxia is about as far removed from the existentialist ideal of passionate commitment as one can get. The divergency becomes still more apparent if we compare Sartre's view with that of certain Eastern philosophies which identify desire with suffering and advocate the total annihilation of desire as a means of salvation. Here there are two important disagreements. In the first place, with Sartre, to destroy all desire would be to destroy the For-itself—not in the nothingness of Nirvana but absolutely. A satisfied For-itself would no longer be a For-itself. The For-itself is desire; that is, it is the nihilating project toward a Being which it can never have or be but which as an end gives the For-itself its meaning. In the second place, desire is not placed on the same level by Sartre and, for example, Buddhism. In the latter, desire is the quality of the lesser personalized Self which must be destroyed if one is to realize one's greater non-personal potentialities. But with Sartre, desire in its most fundamental sense belongs not to the psyche but to the non-personal consciousness. Only the derived specific desires are determined and evaluated in terms of the Ego, which we may recall, is itself an object of consciousness. Here again we find that the goal of Buddhism is part of Sartre's human data. Guilt for Buddhism lies in the specific desires of the personal self; guilt for Sartre is cherishing the illusion of possessing an absolute Self.

This discussion of desire leads us naturally into another major topic, a second primary aspect of Sartre's work which, fully as much as his emphasis on the negativity of consciousness, is the object of hostile attack and misunderstanding—his atheism. There is a sense in which Sartre has obeyed the requirements of Kierkegaard's "Either-Or" more literally than most of his critics. The God he rejects is not some vague power, an unknown X which would account for the origin of the universe, nor is it an ideal or a mythus to symbolize man's quest for the Good. It is specifically the God of the Scholastics or at least any idea of God as a specific, all powerful, absolute, existing Creator. Many people who consider themselves religious could quite comfortably accept Sartre's philosophy if he did not embarrass them by making his pronouncement, "There is no God," quite so specific. Some even go so far as to insist that his philosophy is religious because it signifies an intense serious concern with ultimate problems and human purposes and because (contrary to what is often said on other occasions) it includes a sense of human responsibility and sets a high premium on honesty with oneself. This attitude, I think,

is mistaken. Sartre's whole endeavor is to explain man's predicament in human terms without postulating an existent God to guarantee anything. Those who read him as religious are saying that one may be religious without any non-human absolute. This may be true, but Sartre says in effect that we must call such a position an atheistic humanism. Kierkegaard would certainly have agreed with him.¹⁵

Sartre's religious comments fall under two general headings. First there are those passages in which he specifically attacks the traditional concepts of God and attempts to prove them false because self-contradictory. Second, throughout all of *Being and Nothingness* there are religious overtones, the use of traditional religious phraseology in contexts such that evidently he is attempting to bring into an human framework phenomena frequently held to be religious.

The logical arguments focus on three problems: (1) Is the idea of God as a Creator self-consistent and does this leave any room for human freedom? (2) Is there an inconsistency in the view of God as *Causa Sui*? (3) Can God exist outside a totality?

In considering the concept of God as the Creator, Sartre uses artistic creation as a parallel. The book which I write emanates from me, but once created, it is in a sense no longer mine. I can not control what use is made of it or what people may think that it says to them. It may "say" something which I never intended. So with the idea of God the Creator. If the creature is still inwardly dependent on God, then he is not separate, not free, not an independent existent. But if in his inner being he is not dependent on God, then he no longer can receive from God any justification for his existence or any absoluteness. He does not "need" a Creator. Either man is free and does not derive his meaning from God, or he is dependent on God and not free. For many reasons, some of them already discussed, Sartre rejects the second alternative. He rejects also two other positions closely connected with the idea of God as Creator. One of these is Leibniz' view of freedom, according to which God has determined each man's essence and then left him to act freely in accordance with the demands of his essence. Sartre's reply here is to reject the view that this is freedom. He argues that if God has given us an essence, this is to determine all our future actions by one original gesture. Thus by implication Sartre once more rejects a Creator because of his own fundamental position on the For-itself's total freedom. The other point he

¹⁵ It has always seemed to me that T. S. Eliot in *The Cocktail Party* is presenting a dramatization of these two choices. Clearly Celia has taken the Kierkegaardian leap in faith. Lavinia and Edward would, according to my interpretation, represent the choice of atheistic existentialism as they reject any idea that they might escape from themselves toward something higher, and soberly assume responsibility for their lives. The triviality of their lives even after their awakening to the truth about themselves may be partly a documentation of Sartre's view of the absurdity of existence or simply a reflection of Eliot's own view that life apart from God is a Wasteland.

makes as the result of an interview which he says that he had with the Reverend Father Boisselot. (p. 538) Father Boisselot made the statement that the Last Judgment is a kind of "closing of the account" effected by God, who determines when one is to die, thus making one "finally be what one has been—irremediably." Sartre agrees that at the moment of death one becomes only his past and hence an in-itself; the meaning of one's life is henceforth to be determined and sustained only as others are interested in interpreting it. But he denies that one's life is free if a God has been able to determine the end of it. According to whether I die before or after completing a great artistic work, or committing a great crime, the meaning of my life will vary greatly. If God is to determine the time, then I shall not have been responsible for making my life what it will have been. Of course, if God does not determine my death, the fact remains that unless I commit suicide, I do not myself determine it. But this undetermined contingency Sartre does not regard as a threat to freedom, rather just one more example of the finitude within which I make myself.

The idea of God as a Self-cause has already been mentioned in connection with our discussion of desire. A related but slightly different argument is put in terms of necessity and contingency. It runs as follows: If God causes himself, then he must stand at a distance from himself. This makes God's self into something contingent; i.e., dependent. But the contingent can not be God. Therefore there is no God. Or starting from the other end, if God is not contingent, then he does not exist, because existence is contingent.

Again we can not without contradiction look on God as an intelligent being who both transcends and includes the totality.

"For if God is consciousness, he is integrated in the totality. And if by his nature he is a being *beyond consciousness* (that is, an in-itself which would be its own foundation) still the totality can appear to him only as *object* (in that case he lacks the totality's internal integration as the subjective effort to re-apprehend the self) or as *subject* (then since God is *not* this subject, he can only experience it without knowing it). Thus no point of view on the totality is conceivable; the totality has no 'outside' and the very question of the meaning of the 'underside' is stripped of meaning. We cannot go further." (p. 302)

Finally all these concepts and Sartre's objections to them are seen to involve the principle that man as for-itself lives with the constant ideal (projected in the form of God) of achieving a synthesis of In-itself-For-itself. This is an obviously self-contradictory ideal, for the essence of the For-itself is the power to secrete a Nothingness, to be always in the proc-

ness of becoming, to be-about-to-be. If it is to exist fully, the For-itself must forever assert its lack of Being in order that it may reveal Being, so that there may be Being. For the For-itself to be one with the In-itself would necessitate an identification of fullness, of Being, and Non-being—an identification impossible because self-contradictory. The only way by which the For-itself could become In-itself would be to cease being For-itself, and this we have seen can happen only in death. There are reminiscences of this irrational pursuit in the Freudian longing for the security of the womb, in man's nostalgic desire to regain the lost paradise of oneness with nature, in the mystic's desire to be absorbed in the Absolute.

One may pick flaws in these arguments. For example, one might argue that Sartre is guilty of a *petitio principis* in his assertion that Being is contingent, or that his example of the work of art could by analogy be used to prove rather than to disprove the case for a divine Creator. More important, the religious believer might well assert that God by definition does not have to meet the tests of human logic. Perhaps the more serious attack on religion lies not in these arguments but in Sartre's attempts to show how we can see for so-called religious phenomena an explanation which would not need to go outside a non-supernatural ontology. It might be said that in so doing he is following the same line of approach as that employed by Freud when he tries to prove that God is a gigantic father image, a projection of the super-ego.

Thus Sartre claims that our idea of the Creator is simply an extrapolation from our recognition of ourselves as manipulators of the instrumental complexes of the world. As each of us forms a center of reference for objects in the world and uses them, so we think of God as a kind of master artisan who stands both as an absolute center of reference and as the original fabricator of tools. In the same way the concept of an omniscient Deity arises consequent to our search for an absolute Third who would look at us without being in turn looked-at. This need occurs in us, Sartre says, because our only genuine sense of community comes in the form of an Us-object when we perceive ourselves along with others forming the object of the gaze of an Other. Our attempt to feel ourselves one with all of mankind necessitates the presence of a Third who looks at us all collectively but upon whom no outside gaze may be directed.

Interestingly enough, Sartre's view of the relation between the In-itself and the For-itself presents, as it seems to me, an old theological problem in new dress, though Sartre in this instance does not point up the connection. The For-itself, as I have repeatedly said, is absolutely dependent on the In-itself and is a mere abstraction without it. Yet the In-itself, since it is a plenitude, has no need of the For-itself. It is this lack of reciprocity which prevents our seeing in Being a perfect synthesis of two moments. If one likes, one may see here the old difficulty encountered by theology.

If God is perfect, full Being, why did he feel the need to create men? Sartre is up against the same problem. If the In-itself is absolute fullness, why should it ever, or how could it ever have effected the "hole of Being" which we know as consciousness? Like many Believers Sartre is forced to accept this as an ultimate fact, if not a Mystery, and offers only an "as-if" explanation. Everything has happened "as if" Being in an effort to found itself had split and produced the For-itself, which is the foundation of its own Nothingness but not of its own Being.

In addition to the passages devoted to the discussion of God, there are offered explanations of other concepts frequently associated with religion. One of the most important of these is Sartre's discussion of guilt. Here we may see a distinction between what I should like to call psychological guilt and existential guilt. Psychological guilt, by which I mean consciousness of doing the kind of wrong which can be avoided and for which one is thus personally responsible, Sartre finds in the conduct of bad faith. It consists in not accepting one's responsibilities as a For-itself, in seeking to blame someone or something for what one has done freely oneself, in choosing to assert one's freedom only where it is expedient and on other occasions to seek refuge in a theory of psychological determinism. It is to pretend that one is born with a determined self instead of recognizing that one spends one's life pursuing and making oneself. It is the refusal to face the anguish which accompanies the recognition of our absolute freedom. Thus guilt is a lack of authenticity, which comes close to being the one new and absolute virtue in existentialism.¹⁶

But rather surprisingly in a non-theistic philosophy we find also a concept of existential guilt, an inescapable guilt, a species of Original Sin. "My original Fall is the existence of the Other." (p. 263) Both my shame and my pride stem from the fact that I have an "outside" or "nature," a self which exists for the Other and which I am unable to determine or even to know. Thus although I can never, even if I try, be an object to myself, I am made an object for others. "It is before the Other that I am guilty. I am guilty first when beneath the Other's look I experience my alienation and my nakedness as a fall from grace which I must assume. This is the meaning of the famous line from Scripture: They knew that they were naked." (p. 410) Thus the For-itself, which is to itself wholly subjectivity, feels itself to be guilty because it is made an object by another. It is guilty because it consents to this alienation and again guilty in that it will inevitably cause the Other to experience this same alienation. We can not live without making objects and means of the Other, thus transcending his transcendence, and this is to do violence to his subjectivity. Fear before God, says Sartre, comes when one tries to glorify

¹⁶ Marjorie Grene has written an excellent article on this point. "Authenticity: An Existential Virtue." *Ethics*. Vol. LXII, No. 4. July 1952. pp. 266-274.

this object-state by positing oneself as only an object before an absolute subject. (p. 290) But for Sartre this would be an intensification of one's psychological guilt, for it amounts to a false denial of one's free subjectivity. The reverse situation occurs when one without rejecting God's existence tries to make of him an absolute object by performing black masses, desecrating the Host, desiring evil for evil's sake, etc. (In this last instance, however, it must be noted that this is to desire evil only in accordance with the conventional definition of it.)

In many passages where there is no explicit religious association Sartre seems by his choice of words to indicate such connection. There is for example his use of the three "ekstases." The term inevitably suggests mystic connotations. Desan hints that the concept of three ekstases may be compared to the Christian Trinity—although he never attempts to carry out the comparison.¹⁷ I do not myself see any possibility of sustaining a direct comparison between Sartre's three ekstases and the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. But since in each case the ekstasis is that standing apart from self which was the mystic's goal, it seems probable that here as frequently Sartre is offering as part of his description of the human condition an experience which in a different context altogether has been given a religious significance. Sartre's three ekstases are: (1) The ever renewed internal negation of the In-itself by the For-itself. This involves the "diaspora" of the three temporal ekstases. In the present the For-itself is not anything. But it is present to the In-itself. In the light of what the For-itself chooses to make of the past (by which is meant that which the For-itself has been, an in-itself from which it is now separated by a nothingness) the For-itself thrusts itself toward the Future by choosing the Self which it will be. (2) The reflection by which the For-itself reflects on its original nihilation (a process known as pure reflection) and on its psychic states (impure reflection). (3) Being-for-others when the For-itself realizes that it has a Self which exists for the Other and which it can never know.

Certain other vaguely religious concepts are still more briefly treated. Eternity, for instance, Sartre defines as the ideal value which man is seeking and which "is not the infinity of duration, of that vain pursuit after the self for which I am myself responsible; man seeks a repose in self, the atemporality of the absolute coincidence with himself." (p. 141-142) A sacred object is one which in the world points to transcendence beyond the world. (p. 374) The "margin of unpredictability" offered by the unforeseen resistance of the In-itself is related to the Greek habit of erecting an altar to an unknown god. (p. 507) A kind of corporeal pantheism too receives its due in Sartre's description of one way in which we may "exist our body." If a person chooses to identify himself with the body and its pleasures to the fullest extent possible, this

¹⁷ Desan. *Op. cit.*, p. 73.

may be interpreted as one method by which the For-itself "makes the in-itself exist." "In this case the desired synthesis of the in-itself with the For-itself will be the quasi-pantheistic synthesis of the totality of the in-itself with the for-itself which recovers it. Here the body is the instrument of the synthesis; it loses itself in fatigue, for example, in order that this in-itself may exist to the fullest." (p. 456)

To such passages may be added others in which the mere language suggests that old terms are being deliberately worked into a new framework. Thus the process by which the For-itself faces up to its true being, a process which Sartre tells us is necessary before one can lead an ethical life, is called a *katharsis* or purification. External objects or beings are "revealed as co-present in a world where the For-itself unites them with its own blood by that total ecstatic sacrifice of the self which is called presence." (p. 122) Even the proof of the transcendence, the transphenomenality of Being, is termed an ontological proof. It is as though Sartre were attempting to use a new theological argument to prove the existence of absolute, unjustified, unconscious mass.

Sartre's summary of his religious position is brief and to the point. "Everything happens as if the world, man, and man-in-the-world succeeded in realizing only a missing God." (p. 623) The question has sometimes been raised as to just why since Sartre's whole interpretation of existence postulates the pursuit of God, he is not willing to go one step further and postulate a God who exists. Or if this is asking too much (and actually I think it would in effect overthrow the whole work) then why does he not accept the concept as a valuable myth with inspirational power? While Sartre has never in so many words posed this question and answered it, I think that it is clear what his reply would be. He rejects the notion that God actually exists because the idea appears to him false on logical grounds. He refuses the myth partly because of his stern conviction that we must face reality and not hide behind myths which would tend to blur the sharp edge of the human dilemma. He refuses it also because it is, at least he believes, inevitably accompanied by a belief in absolutes and a theory of a human nature which would determine our destiny, because it conceals the fact that each man must discover and affirm his own values, that there is nothing to guarantee the permanent validity of any one set of ideals as compared with another.

The fact that ultimately Sartre's rejection of God is based on rational arguments (whether or not his critics are persuaded of their cogency) is extremely significant in view of the fact that existentialism is generally regarded as an example of contemporary irrationalism. If we examine Sartre's position carefully, we find that it emphasizes both reason and unreason and in a manner precisely the reverse of what we find in the writings of either the Scholastics or the Neo-Platonists. In the religious writers we are familiar with the idea that man proceeds within the human

sphere by relying on reason, that he may use reason in his initial approach to God, but that the final vision and, paradoxically, the ultimate source of true wisdom is non-rational. All this Sartre completely reverses. When consciousness first chooses its way of Being, this is a non-rational, actually a pre-rational choice. The For-itself may choose to live rationally, to live by emotion, to deny the validity of logic, to honor only scientific "objectivity," to refuse to confine itself within any one attitude—the possibilities are many and varied. But it is clear that Sartre feels that the rational choice is the best one. This was already evident in his treatment of the emotions. The emotional relation, which is a purely personal relation set up by the For-itself between it and the In-itself, is inadequate because it is ineffective; it can not (at least not directly) affect the environment and produce lasting results. This is because it is essentially a denial of the instrumental complexes of the world; it refuses to admit the external resistance, what Sartre (after Bachelard) calls the "coefficient of adversity" of the In-itself. Reason, on the other hand, always takes this organized world into consideration, for by definition knowledge is the one real bridge between the For-itself and the In-itself. If we may say that reason is consciousness' perception of those organizations and relations which the brute universe is capable of sustaining and that it is the perception of relations established in human products (language, etc.) such that any human being may recognize them, that it is also the will to confine oneself within these limits, then certainly in the final analysis Sartre's philosophy is a philosophy of reason. It includes the irrational among its data and recognizes that man's irrational behavior is an important part of him. But the final appeal, the standard of judgment is reason. It is true that Sartre regards the universe as being fundamentally without purpose and without any rational organization save what man puts into it. But this is merely to assert that reason is human in origin. Bad faith is essentially irrational because it asserts two mutually contradictory principles, that one is free and that one is not free. Thus contrary to the Scholastic who would have man start with reason but ultimately gain salvation by departing from reason (even if this means to go "beyond reason"), the existentialist hero recognizes the irrational nature of his initial choice but saves himself by a rational acceptance of the hard facts of his condition.

Hitherto we have for the most part kept ourselves within the confines of ontology. And this is proper since Sartre has subtitled his book "An Essay on Phenomenological Ontology." Mistakes are often made by those who would treat the work as a metaphysics. Sartre states clearly his distinction between the two: Ontology studies "the structures of being of the existent taken as a totality"; it describes the conditions under which there may be a world, human reality, etc. It answers the questions "How?" or "What?" and is description rather than explanation. For this reason it

can state positively. Metaphysics, on the other hand, is concerned with origins and seeks to explain why there is this particular world. But since such explanations seek to go behind the Being which they must presuppose, they can be only hypotheses. Sartre does not disapprove of metaphysical attempts, but he noticeably refrains from engaging in them. Yet he does erect an edifice of his own on the foundation of his ontology, and this is his unique brand of psychology—existential psychoanalysis. While this does not offer hypotheses to explain the origin of the world or consciousness, it does nevertheless offer hypotheses for interpreting concrete examples of human behavior and principles by which to understand individual personalities. Sartre even speaks longingly of the need for an existentialist Freud, who presumably might use this psychoanalysis as the basis for a new therapy.

While still deeply indebted to Freud, Sartre has effected a sharper break with the Freudian tradition than any other contemporary psychologist. This break is in every instance linked with his peculiar concept of a free, translucent consciousness, a position which leads him to reject all notions of an unconscious (with Id, Superego, and Ego) as well as any idea of psychological determinism functioning in terms of a basic libido, will to power, universal Oedipus complex, and the like, all of which Sartre regards as secondary structures. Since Sartre has himself so clearly outlined both similarities and points of disagreement between himself and the followers of Freud, Jung, and Adler, there is no need for me to take up the matter here. I should like, however, to comment on one problem presented by Sartre's view and then to mention briefly some consequences of this new psychology.

The most important problem, I think, concerns the question as to just what within Sartre's psychology we are to make of the personality. We are told that through the new psychoanalysis we reach the person; that is, we discover the original choice of a mode of Being by which the For-itself has related itself to the world. But wherein does this person consist? It seems that it must be the Ego and not consciousness, for the latter is non-personal. Yet since it is consciousness (not the Ego) which makes the original choice and—as the For-itself realizes in anguish—may at any moment replace this first choice of Being by a different one, it seems that we have not found the person unless we have reached the pre-reflective consciousness. But how can we have an impersonal person? Possibly this is quibbling. Perhaps Sartre means that we are to learn about the choice made by the original consciousness and that obviously we are informed by observation of the Ego. This would seem to be the case, particularly since we can not at any event get inside another's subjectivity.

We may also ask about the nature of the unity of this personality. In rejecting the idea of an unconscious, Sartre not only insists that there

are only conscious acts but claims that the For-itself always acts as a whole and hence is a unity. But it is a strange sort of unity since the For-itself is never united with its self but always separated from it in the various ekstases. Actually the problem may not be as difficult and insoluble as it first appears. Sartre is, of course, not the first philosopher to deny the existence of a Self-substance. When he speaks of our pursuit of a self, he means that we can not say that a particular For-itself is something any more than we can say that at any given instant the flying arrow is at the point C on the designated route A—Z. The nature of the For-itself is rather such that it is continually choosing to project itself toward future possibilities. In this sense it is never united with a self because it is process rather than entity. But we need not take the point of view of certain critics who argue that Sartre is here inconsistent in that he describes the For-itself as self-less and then treats it as an individualized being.

Desan, for example, discusses Sartre's "repudiation of the Ego" (which in itself is an inaccurate representation) so as to try to show that Sartre needs an Ego-less For-itself for ontology, but a personal For-itself for psychology, for ethics, and for relations with others; and he claims that Sartre alternates between the two concepts. All of Desan's arguments are based on the assumption that Sartre in stating that the Ego is not identical with the original consciousness has taken away any reality of being from the For-itself and has given up all right to employ the words "I" or "Me." But this is a misconception. In the first place Sartre has not repudiated the Ego; he has only made of it an object of the pre-reflective consciousness rather than contemporary with it. But it exists just as much as objects in the world exist. Also Sartre never denies the existence of an active, organizing (*constituante*), individual consciousness any more than does William James, who likewise rejected consciousness as an entity. He merely insists that it is essentially a Nothingness which is individualized by its objects but never wholly determined by past objects to an extent which would prescribe what it will do with present or future ones. Consciousness can never blot out the fact that it has been aware of certain objects (part of which it has unified within the ideal unity of the Ego); at times it may even let itself be trapped by the Ego and not actively realize its ability to change its point of view on past objects. But the possibility is there. When Sartre speaks of inter-subjective relations, of the phenomenon of bad faith, etc. he is referring to the free consciousness which has been directed toward certain objects, which usually asserts itself consistently with the general "character" of the Ego, but which is not forced to do so. In ordinary experience consciousness for all practical purposes fully asserts itself through the "I", but anguish occasionally warns us that this familiar "I" is only a screen. Nevertheless consciousnesses are *particular* since they appear at a definite

time and place, thus nihilating Being from a particular point of view. Sartre has warned us, as we said earlier, that strictly speaking one should not say "my consciousness" but "consciousness of me." But if I say "consciousness of me" and if you say "consciousness of me," our consciousnesses are as distinct as the Egos of which they are conscious.

What then becomes of the unity of the personality in this conception? Consciousness acts as a unity, and since either directly or indirectly through the Ego consciousness chooses its way of being, in every external or psychic act—in this sense personality is one. But in so far as consciousness may focus on various aspects of the psychic ego, there may result phenomena which look like those of the split personality. In the same way what seems to be an inconsistent act or a sudden "conversion" may be due to the fact that consciousness has chosen to act in accordance with an usually ignored part of its psychic past or that it has totally transcended the Ego and made a new choice of being. The latter is a rare event, but biographies and novels as well as the literature of the mystics attest to its occurrence.

It would be interesting to ask what—if we follow Sartre's view—would become of the old Socratic dictum that if a man knows the good, he will necessarily choose it. In one passage Sartre seems to restate Socrates' belief almost verbatim. In his discussion of evil he points out that the For-itself is not evil any more than it is good (or anything else). For if it were to be evil, it would be an in-itself. The For-itself, as Sartre is ever reiterating, is its being only in the mode of "having to be" or of "choosing to be." Now among other possibilities from which it chooses, it may choose to be good. It can not, however, chose to be evil!

"If I were to be evil for myself, I should of necessity be so in the mode of *having to be* so and would have to apprehend myself and will myself as evil. But this would mean that I must discover myself as willing what appears to me as the opposite of my Good and precisely because it is Evil or the opposite of my Good. It is therefore expressly necessary that I will the contrary of what I desire at one and the same moment and in the same relation; that is, I would have to hate myself precisely as I am myself. I would have to approve myself by the same act which makes me blame myself." (pp. 273-274)

All of this is impossible because since I am my own nothingness, I can never gain the necessary objectivity with regard to myself. Yet if one can not knowingly choose evil, one can be guilty of bad faith and of vice, which somewhat unexpectedly Sartre defines as the love of failure. How is this possible? The answer seems to lie in concluding that an individual For-itself may not consider Bad Faith and love of failure to be evils. It is only from Sartre's point of view (and ours if we follow him)

that a person may fail to choose the good, and this is because he does not know what we call evil to be evil.

On three other aspects of Sartre's psychology I should like to comment briefly. The first relates to his views on the subjective and the objective as related to the analysis of human character. As pointed out earlier, consciousness can not take a point of view on itself as a totality. Strictly speaking, any human fact is a subjective fact since any observation of the world is a human—subjective—observation. But at the same time while Sartre denies that consciousness can make an object out of itself, his position allows us to see why the For-itself can take just as legitimate (and no more so) an objective point of view on certain of its own states as it can on the states of any one else or as anyone else can with respect to it. If Pierre and Paul are both considering Pierre's love for a certain woman, they are both considering an objective state. For while the immediate impulse is a love-consciousness which Pierre is, the state of love is part of Pierre's object-ego (or at least his psyche). Both he and Paul may view it as an object. Each judges it in terms of the other objects of which his consciousness is and has been aware. Thus a person may under certain circumstances undertake his own psychoanalysis. He stands before his psyche not in any privileged position but exactly as does the psychiatrist. The relatively higher or lower chances of his success will depend on the practical wisdom which he can bring to bear in his evaluations of his own psychic being. At the same time neither he nor the psychiatrist can analyze the pre-reflective consciousness, the patient because he is this consciousness, the analyst because he can know it only as object whereas its being is pure subjectivity. Both patient and analyst must attempt to judge the acts of his consciousness through its effects as revealed in the outside world and in the Ego.

Two other psychological positions, original, I believe, with Sartre, are of particular importance in connection with his views on the For-itself's relation with other people—the For-Others. These are his ideas about the nature of the body and about sexuality. In one sense, of course, the body represents man's facticity, his Being-there in the world. It determines certain physical limits to what the For-itself can do within or to the world. And if we speak of its actual chemical make-up, we are considering part of that Being with which the For-itself as Nothingness is forever contrasted. Yet except when it becomes a corpse the body does not actually belong within the province of the In-itself. As "existed" by the For-itself it is a psychic object; in fact we might more accurately say that the For-itself is its body. Without a body the For-itself could have no relation whatsoever with what we call the world. For the For-itself is consciousness of objects as seen, felt, etc., in other words, as perceived through the senses. The For-itself does not have senses. It is present to the world through the senses, and the world spatially has meaning only with

the body as a center of reference. As a For-itself, although I can adopt the point of view of an Other by holding up a hand or foot and looking at it, I experience my body as mine only when I experience the world through it. In this case I do not view my body as an instrument which I use as in the old soul-body dualism, but I am this instrument toward which the instruments of the world are pointing and by which the world is revealed as an hierarchy of instrumental complexes. If the For-itself were not body simultaneously with consciousness, the idea of objects as instruments would not make sense. I know my own body not as a piece of In-itself with which I am burdened but as Being-for-itself. "Thus to say that I have entered into the world, come to the world, or that there is a world, or that I have a body is one and the same thing." (p. 318)

In this capacity the body serves as a necessary link by which Sartre sets up a cogito of the Other's existence. We saw that in "La Transcendence de l'Ego" Sartre believed that by making the Ego a part of the psychic and hence an object in the world, he could refute solipsism. In *Being and Nothingness* he states that in the earlier article he had been too optimistic.

"Even if outside the empirical Ego there is *nothing other* than the consciousness of that Ego—that is, a transcendental field without a subject—the fact remains that my affirmation of the Other demands and requires the existence beyond the world of a similar transcendental field. Consequently the only way to escape solipsism would be here again to prove that my transcendental consciousness is in its very being affected by the extramundane existence of other consciousnesses of the same type."
(p. 235)

* As far as reasons and proof are concerned, Sartre is convinced that we can never prove the Other's existence. This is because the Other is by definition a For-itself outside my experience and proof must be based on what is within my experience. But while we do not prove the Other's existence, we encounter him as a "factual necessity"; our doubt of his existence is only the abstract doubt which we might equally well apply to our own existence, and it is not persuasive. By a kind of ontological proof Sartre had shown the necessity for acknowledging the existence of the In-itself. The existence of the Other is not an ontological necessity, for we could imagine, if need be, a world where there were no others. (p. 252) But the Other's existence is a "contingent necessity." We do not encounter reasons for believing in the Other's existence, but we encounter the Other and would offer as much natural resistance to solipsism as we would offer to doubts of our own existence. This means that while I can not prove the fact that the very being of my consciousness is affected

by another consciousness, I do in fact experience it.

The connecting link here is the body. When I "exist" my body in the process of achieving my usual relations with objects in the world, this is my "body-for-me." But the body has two other dimensions as well. There is the body-for-the-Other and "the body-seen-by-the-Other." When I behold the Other's body, I can interpret its movements only by assuming that it is directed by a For-itself, in short by recognizing its psychic quality. But this means that the spatial and instrumental organization of the world which I had effected with my own body as a center of reference is no longer the only possible arrangement. Instead there appears a grouping of objects around the Other as center; he has caused an "internal haemorrhage of my world which bleeds in his direction." He has stolen my world away from me. Still further development occurs when I experience my body-seen-by-the-Other. In this case I suddenly realize that I exist as an object for the Other, that I possess a self which he knows and which I can never know, and that I am vulnerable to the Other, who may anticipate and block my possibilities for action. Thus the revelation of the Other is the Look. I experience him as subject when he looks at me and as object when I look at him. And upon this unstable shifting of subject and object is erected the whole edifice of Sartrean love, hate, sadism, masochism, and even indifference, all of which together constitute that conflict which is at the basis of all inter-human relationships.

While the body is that through which the Look is experienced, it is sexuality which just as much as in Freudian psychology—though in a far different way—lies at the origin of all human relations. Like Freud, Sartre believes that the mature sex impulse is the result of a long development but that sexuality exists even in the very young child. He is, however, entirely original so far as I know when he writes, "Man, it is said, is a sexual being because he possesses a sex. And if the reverse were true? If sex were only the instrument, and, so to speak, the image of a fundamental sexuality? If man possessed a sex only because he is originally and fundamentally a sexual being as a being who exists in the world in relation with other men?" (p. 383) This amazing statement he explains by an analysis of sexual desire. Pointing out first that desire is evidently not necessarily found exclusively when accompanied by the presence of fully developed sex organs, he says that sexual desire is not merely or primarily the desire of physical "satisfaction." It is rather the deep-seated impulse of the For-itself to capture the Other's subjectivity. It tries to achieve this goal by, so to speak, "incarnating" its own consciousness, letting itself feel itself almost wholly flesh and so inducing the Other to do the same. But this appeal of the flesh to the flesh ultimately fails, not only because satiated desire ceases to be desire, but because in physical possession the lover still knows only his own pleasure and the body of the Other. The Other's

subjectivity can become a part of my experience only in two ways—either as I know myself to be the object of it or as I look upon it as an object; but in neither case do I as subject know him as subject. The reason why I want to get hold of his subjectivity is, of course, to protect myself against the possibility of his making an object of me. The fact that both lover and beloved feel this same need accounts for the instability and ultimate failure of love.

I am purposely avoiding discussion of the fuller implications of the ethical and social problems touched on in *Being and Nothingness*. This is not because I feel that Sartre has nothing of importance to say on the subject or because I agree with those who claim that for the For-itself, as Sartre has portrayed it, no personal or social ethics is possible. It is simply that I believe it unwise to discuss a subject which Sartre himself has told us he is waiting to develop in another work. In the light of numerous statements to the effect that man is a useless passion and that life is absurd, and in view of Sartre's attempt to show that all of the familiar attitudes toward the Other—love, hate, masochism, sadism, and indifference—result in failure, it is no wonder that critics have been sceptical as to the possibility of future positive development. Yet it is important to note that Francis Jeanson, in a book prefaced by a letter of approval from Sartre himself, offers the idea that Sartre has described these concrete human projects as they generally are, rather than as they have to be. On the level on which the "spirit of seriousness" chooses to live, life is absurd, but the absurdity consists precisely in maintaining life at this level.¹⁸ If consciousness will practice a "purifying reflection," it may find possibilities for a new set of ethical values consistent with its total freedom and unlimited self-responsibility.

In the absence of more information about this "purifying reflection" we are limited to observation of what Sartre has done in applying his philosophical conclusions in literary analyses. There is at least the foundation for a social ethics in an article which came out in 1946 called "Matérialisme et Révolution" (*Les Temps Modernes*). Here in his portrayal of the New Revolutionary Sartre lays down a plan for a society which would allow for continual self-transcendence in the direction of greater freedom. As yet the nearest approach to an existentialist hero who would represent an ideal of personal ethics seems to be Orestes in *The Flies*. In this play, which is quite obviously an attack on the "spirit of seriousness" and conventional religious views, Orestes refuses to join with the people in their feeling of general guilt and need for atonement induced by the sin of Clytemnestra and Aegisthus (Adam and Eve?). He will not be awed by a display of the wonders of the Universe (the Voice out of the Whirlwind?). He insists that he became free from his Creator at the moment of creation, and he claims that he is not in the Universe to

¹⁸ Jeanson, *Op. cit.* Especially page 276.

carry out any prescribed orders laid down by a god. But what does he offer in return? He insists on accepting full responsibility for each of his acts. He gives up the role of spectator and voluntarily commits his freedom to the cause of the people of Argos. He is willing to give up his peace of mind for the sake of the suffering. He sets out alone to find new paths of action appropriate for man who can no longer discover his destiny by viewing himself as a part of Nature's plan. In short he accepts the tension of absolute freedom and total responsibility. In the play Orestes does not seem to know quite what course he will follow once he has left Argos, but we can feel sure that he will set a high premium on rational facing up to the facts of the human condition as he sees them and will work out principles of conduct consistent with his earlier pronouncements. I suspect that at the present moment this is about as far as we are justified in going in making any prediction as to the nature of the ethical discussion which Sartre has promised us.

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Being and Nothingness

INTRODUCTION

The Pursuit of Being

I. THE PHENOMENON

MODERN thought has realized considerable progress by reducing the existent to the series of appearances which manifest it. Its aim was to overcome a certain number of dualisms which have embarrassed philosophy and to replace them by the monism of the phenomenon. Has the attempt been successful?

In the first place we certainly thus get rid of that dualism which in the existent opposes interior to exterior. There is no longer an exterior for the existent if one means by that a superficial covering which hides from sight the true nature of the object. And this true nature in turn, if it is to be the secret reality of the thing, which one can have a presentiment of or which one can suppose but can never reach because it is the "interior" of the object under consideration—this nature no longer exists. The appearances which manifest the existent are neither interior nor exterior; they are all equal, they all refer to other appearances, and none of them is privileged. Force, for example, is not a metaphysical conatus of an unknown kind which hides behind its effects (accelerations, deviations, etc.); it is the totality of these effects. Similarly an electric current does not have a secret reverse side; it is nothing but the totality of the physical-chemical actions which manifest it (electrolysis, the incandescence of a carbon filament, the displacement of the needle of a galvanometer, etc.). No one of these actions alone is sufficient to reveal it. But no action indicates anything which is *behind itself*; it indicates only itself and the total series.

The obvious conclusion is that the dualism of being and appearance is no longer entitled to any legal status within philosophy. The appearance refers to the total series of appearances and not to a hidden reality which would drain to itself all the *being* of the existent. And the appearance for its part is not an inconsistent manifestation of this being. To the extent that men had believed in noumenal realities, they have presented appearance as a pure negative. It was "that which is not being"; it had no other

being than that of illusion and error. But even this being was borrowed, it was itself a pretence, and philosophers met with the greatest difficulty in maintaining cohesion and existence in the appearance so that it should not itself be reabsorbed in the depth of non-phenomenal being. But if we once get away from what Nietzsche called "the illusion of worlds-behind-the-scene," and if we no longer believe in the being-behind-the-appearance, then the appearance becomes full positivity; its essence is an "appearing" which is no longer opposed to being but on the contrary is the measure of it. For the being of an existent is exactly what it appears. Thus we arrive at the idea of the *phenomenon* such as we can find, for example in the "phenomenology" of Husserl or of Heidegger—the phenomenon or the relative-absolute. Relative the phenomenon remains, for "to appear" supposes in essence somebody to whom to appear. But it does not have the double relativity of Kant's *Erscheinung*. It does not point over its shoulder to a true being which would be, for it, absolute. What it is, it is absolutely, for it reveals itself as it is. The phenomenon can be studied and described as such, for it is *absolutely indicative of itself*.

The duality of potency and act falls by the same stroke. The act is everything. Behind the act there is neither potency nor "hexis"¹ nor virtue. We shall refuse, for example, to understand by "genius"—in the sense in which we say that Proust "had genius" or that he "was" a genius—a particular capacity to produce certain works, which was not exhausted exactly in producing them. The genius of Proust is neither the work considered in isolation nor the subjective ability to produce it; it is the work considered as the totality of the manifestations of the person.

That is why we can equally well reject the dualism of appearance and essence. The appearance does not hide the essence, it reveals it; it is the essence. The essence of an existent is no longer a property sunk in the cavity of this existent; it is the manifest law which presides over the succession of its appearances, it is the principle of the series. To the nominalism of Poincaré, defining a physical reality (an electric current, for example) as the sum of its various manifestations, Duhem rightly opposed his own theory, which makes of the concept the *synthetic unity* of these manifestations. To be sure phenomenology is anything but a nominalism. But essence, as the principle of the series, is definitely only the concatenation of appearances; that is, itself an appearance. This explains how it is possible to have an intuition of essences (the *Wesenchau* of Husserl, for example). The phenomenal being manifests itself; it manifests its essence as well as its existence, and it is nothing but the well connected series of its manifestations.

Does this mean that by reducing the existent to its manifestations we have succeeded in overcoming *all* dualisms? It seems rather that we

¹ From Greek $\xi\varsigma\iota\varsigma$. Sartre seems to have ignored the rough breathing and writes "exis." Tr.

have converted them all into a new dualism: that of finite and infinite. Yet the existent in fact can not be reduced to a *finite* series of manifestations since each one of them is a relation to a subject constantly changing. Although an object may disclose itself only through a single *Abschattung*, the sole fact of there being a subject implies the possibility of multiplying the points of view on that *Abschattung*. This suffices to multiply to infinity the *Abschattung* under consideration. Furthermore if the series of appearances were finite, that would mean that the first appearances do not have the possibility of reappearing, which is absurd, or that they can be all given at once, which is still more absurd. Let us understand indeed that our theory of the phenomenon has replaced the reality of the thing by the objectivity of the phenomenon and that it has based this on an appeal to infinity. The reality of that cup is that it is there and that it is not me. We shall interpret this by saying that the series of its appearances is bound by a principle which does not depend on my whim. But the appearance, reduced to itself and without reference to the series of which it is a part, could be only an intuitive and subjective plenitude, the manner in which the subject is affected. If the phenomenon is to reveal itself as transcendent, it is necessary that the subject himself transcend the appearance toward the total series of which it is a member. He must seize Red through his impression of red. By Red is meant the principle of the series—the electric current through the electrolysis, etc. But if the transcendence of the object is based on the necessity of causing the appearance to be always transcended, the result is that on principle an object posits the series of its appearances as infinite. Thus the appearance, which is *finite*, indicates itself in its finitude, but at the same time in order to be grasped as an appearance-of-that-which-appears, it requires that it be surpassed toward infinity.

This new opposition, the “finite and the infinite,” or better, “the infinite in the finite,” replaces the dualism of being and appearance. What appears in fact is only an aspect of the object, and the object is altogether in that aspect and altogether outside of it. It is altogether *within*, in that it manifests itself *in* that aspect; it shows itself as the structure of the appearance, which is at the same time the principle of the series. It is altogether outside, for the series itself will never appear nor can it appear. Thus the outside is opposed in a new way to the inside, and the being-which-does-not-appear, to the appearance. Similarly a certain “potency” returns to inhabit the phenomenon and confer on it its very transcendence—a potency to be developed in a series of real or possible appearances. The genius of Proust, even when reduced to the works produced, is no less equivalent to the infinity of possible points of view which one can take on that work and which we will call the “inexhaustibility” of Proust’s work. But is not this inexhaustibility which implies a transcendence and a reference to the infinite—is this not an “hexis” at the exact moment

when one apprehends it on the object? The essence finally is radically severed from the individual appearance which manifests it, since on principle it is that which must be able to be manifested by an infinite series of individual manifestations.

In thus replacing a variety of oppositions by a single dualism on which they all are based, have we gained or lost? This we shall soon see. For the moment, the first consequence of the "theory of the phenomenon" is that the appearance does not refer to being as Kant's phenomenon refers to the noumenon. Since there is nothing behind the appearance, and since it indicates only itself (and the total series of appearances), it can not be supported by any being other than its own. The appearance can not be the thin film of nothingness which separates the being-of-the-subject from absolute-being. If the essence of the appearance is an "appearing" which is no longer opposed to any being, there arises a legitimate problem concerning the being of this appearing. It is this problem which will be our first concern and which will be the point of departure for our inquiry into being and nothingness.

II. THE PHENOMENON OF BEING AND THE BEING OF THE PHENOMENON

THE appearance is not supported by any existent different from itself; it has its own being. The first being which we meet in our ontological inquiry is the being of the appearance. Is it itself an appearance? It seems so at first. The phenomenon is what manifests itself, and being manifests itself to all in some way, since we can speak of it and since we have a certain comprehension of it. Thus there must be for it a phenomenon of being, an appearance of being, capable of description as such. Being will be disclosed to us by some kind of immediate access—boredom, nausea, etc., and ontology will be the description of the phenomenon of being as it manifests itself; that is, without intermediary. However for any ontology we should raise a preliminary question: is the phenomenon of being thus achieved identical with the being of phenomena? In other words, is the being which discloses itself to me, which appears to me, of the same nature as the being of existents which appear to me? It seems that there is no difficulty. Husserl has shown how an eidetic reduction is always possible; that is, how one can always pass beyond the concrete phenomenon toward its essence. For Heidegger also "human reality" is ontic-ontological; that is, it can always pass beyond the phenomenon toward its being. But the passage from the particular object to the essence is a passage from homogeneous to homogeneous. Is it the same for the passage from the existent to the phenomenon of being: Is passing beyond the existent toward the phenomenon of being actually to pass beyond it toward its being, as one

passes beyond the particular red toward its essence? Let us consider further.

In a particular object one can always distinguish qualities like color, odor, etc. And proceeding from these, one can always determine an essence which they imply, as a sign implies its meaning. The totality "object-essence" makes an organized whole. The essence is not in the object; it is the meaning of the object, the principle of the series of appearances which disclose it. But being is neither one of the object's qualities, capable of being apprehended among others, nor a meaning of the object. The object does not refer to being as to a signification; it would be impossible, for example, to define being as a presence since absence too discloses being, since not to be *there* means still to be. The object does not possess being, and its existence is not a participation in being, nor any other kind of relation. It *is*. That is the only way to define its manner of being; the object does not hide being, but neither does it reveal being. The object does not hide it, for it would be futile to try to push aside certain qualities of the existent in order to find the being behind them; being is being of them all equally. The object does not reveal being, for it would be futile to address oneself to the object in order to apprehend its being. The existent is a phenomenon; this means that it designates itself as an organized totality of qualities. It designates itself and not its being. Being is simply the condition of all revelation. It is being-for-revealing (*être-pour-dévoiler*) and not revealed being (*être dévoilé*). What then is the meaning of the surpassing toward the ontological, of which Heidegger speaks? Certainly I can pass beyond this table or this chair toward its being and raise the question of the being-of-the-table or the being-of-the-chair.² But at that moment I turn my eyes away from the phenomenon of the table in order to concentrate on the phenomenon of being, which is no longer the condition of all revelation, but which is itself something revealed—an appearance which as such, needs in turn a being on the basis of which it can reveal itself.

If the being of phenomena is not resolved in a phenomenon of being and if nevertheless we can not say anything about being without considering this phenomenon of being, then the exact relation which unites the phenomenon of being to the being of the phenomenon must be established first of all. We can do this more easily if we will consider that the whole of the preceding remarks has been directly inspired by the revealing intuition of the phenomenon of being. By not considering being as the condition of revelation but rather being as an appearance which can be determined in concepts, we have understood first of all that knowledge can not by itself give an account of being; that is, the being of the phenomenon can not be reduced to the phenomenon of being. In a word, the

² Perhaps a more intelligible paraphrase would be, "the question of what it means to be a table or a chair." Tr.

phenomenon of being is "ontological" in the sense that we speak of the *ontological* proof of St. Anselm and Descartes. It is an appeal to being; it requires as phenomenon, a foundation which is transphenomenal. The phenomenon of being requires the transphenomenality of being. That does not mean that being is found hidden *behind* phenomena (we have seen that the phenomenon can not hide being), nor that the phenomenon is an appearance which refers to a distinct being (the phenomenon exists only *qua* appearance; that is, it indicates itself on the foundation of being). What is implied by the preceding considerations is that the being of the phenomenon although coextensive with the phenomenon, can not be subject to the phenomenal condition—which is to exist only in so far as it reveals itself—and that consequently it surpasses the knowledge which we have of it and provides the basis for such knowledge.

III. THE PRE-REFLECTIVE COGITO AND THE BEING OF THE PERCIPERE

ONE will perhaps be tempted to reply that the difficulties mentioned above all pertain to a certain conception of being, to a kind of ontological realism entirely incompatible with the very notion of appearance. What determines the being of the appearance is the fact that it appears. And since we have restricted reality to the phenomenon, we can say of the phenomenon that it is as it appears. Why not push the idea to its limit and say that the being of the appearance is its appearing? This is simply a way of choosing new words to clothe the old "*Esse est percipi*" of Berkeley. And it is in fact just what Husserl and his followers are doing when after having effected the phenomenological reduction, they treat the noema as *unreal* and declare that its *esse* is *percipi*.

It seems that the famous formula of Berkeley can not satisfy us—for two essential reasons, one concerning the nature of the *percipi*, the other that of the *percipere*.

The nature of the percipere.

If every metaphysics in fact presupposes a theory of knowledge, every theory of knowledge in turn presupposes a metaphysics. This means among other things that an idealism intent on reducing being to the knowledge which we have of it, ought first to give some kind of guarantee for the being of knowledge. If one begins, on the other hand, by taking the knowledge as a given, without being concerned to establish a basis for its being, and if one then affirms that *esse est percipi*, the totality "*perceived-perception*," lacks the support of a solid being and so falls away in nothingness. Thus the being of knowledge can not be measured by

knowledge; it is not subject to the *percipi*.³ Therefore the foundation-of-being (*l'être-fondement*) for the *percipere* and the *percipi* can not itself be subject to the *percipi*; it must be transphenomenal. Let us return now to our point of departure. We can always agree that the *percipi* refers to a being not subject to the laws of the appearance, but we still maintain that this transphenomenal being is the being of the subject. Thus the *percipi* would refer to the *percipiens*—the known to knowledge and knowledge to the being who knows (in his capacity as *being*, not as being known); that is, knowledge refers to consciousness. This is what Husserl understood; for if the *noema* is for him an unreal correlate of *noesis*, and if its ontological law is the *percipi*, the *noesis*, on the contrary, appears to him as *reality*, of which the principle characteristic is to give itself to the reflection which knows it as "having already been there before." For the law of being in the knowing subject is to-be-conscious. Consciousness is not a mode of particular knowledge which may be called an inner meaning or self-knowledge; it is the dimension of transphenomenal being in the subject.

Let us look more closely at this dimension of being. We said that consciousness is the knowing being in his capacity as *being* and not as being known. This means that we must abandon the primacy of knowledge if we wish to establish that knowledge. Of course consciousness can know and know itself. But it is in itself something other than a knowledge turned back upon itself.

All consciousness, as Husserl has shown, is consciousness of something. This means that there is no consciousness which is not a positing of a transcendent object, or if you prefer, that consciousness has no "content." We must renounce those neutral "givens" which, according to the system of reference chosen, find their place either "in the world" or "in the psyche." A table is not in consciousness—not even in the capacity of a representation. A table is in space, beside the window, etc. The existence of the table in fact is a center of opacity for consciousness; it would require an infinite process to inventory the total contents of a thing. To introduce this opacity into consciousness would be to refer to infinity the inventory which it can make of itself, to make consciousness a thing, and to deny the *cogito*. The first procedure of a philosophy ought to be to expel things from consciousness and to reestablish its true connection with the world, to know that consciousness is a positional consciousness of the world. All consciousness is positional in that it transcends itself in order to reach an object, and it exhausts itself in this same positing. All that there is of intention in my actual consciousness is directed toward the

³ It goes without saying that any attempt to replace the *percipere* by another *attitude* from human reality would be equally fruitless. If we granted that being is revealed to man in "acting," it would still be necessary to guarantee the being of acting apart from the action.

outside, toward the table; all my judgments or practical activities, all my present inclinations transcend themselves; they aim at the table and are absorbed in it. Not all consciousness is knowledge (there are states of affective consciousness, for example), but all knowing consciousness can be knowledge only of its object.

However, the necessary and sufficient condition for a knowing consciousness to be knowledge of its object, is that it be consciousness of itself as being that knowledge. This is a necessary condition, for if my consciousness were not consciousness of being consciousness of the table, it would then be consciousness of that table without consciousness of being so. In other words, it would be a consciousness ignorant of itself, an unconscious—which is absurd. This is a sufficient condition, for my being conscious of being conscious of that table suffices in fact for me to be conscious of it. That is of course not sufficient to permit me to affirm that this table exists *in itself*—but rather that it exists *for me*.

What is this consciousness of consciousness? We suffer to such an extent from the illusion of the primacy of knowledge that we are immediately ready to make of the consciousness of consciousness an *idea ideae* in the manner of Spinoza; that is, a knowledge of knowledge. Alain, wanting to express the obvious "To know is to be conscious of knowing," interprets it in these terms: "To know is to know that one knows." In this way we should have defined reflection or positional consciousness of consciousness, or better yet knowledge of consciousness. This would be a complete consciousness directed toward something which is not it; that is, toward consciousness as object of reflection. It would then transcend itself and like the positional consciousness of the world would be exhausted in aiming at its object. But that object would be itself a consciousness.

It does not seem possible for us to accept this interpretation of the consciousness of consciousness. The reduction of consciousness to knowledge in fact involves our introducing into consciousness the subject-object dualism which is typical of knowledge. But if we accept the law of the knower-known dyad, then a third term will be necessary in order for the knower to become known in turn, and we will be faced with this dilemma: Either we stop at any one term of the series—the known, the knower known, the knower known by the knower, etc. In this case the totality of the phenomenon falls into the unknown; that is, we always bump up against a non-self-conscious reflection and a final term. Or else we affirm the necessity of an infinite regress (*idea ideae ideae*, etc.), which is absurd. Thus to the necessity of ontologically establishing consciousness we would add a new necessity: that of establishing it epistemologically. Are we obliged after all to introduce the law of this dyad into consciousness? Consciousness of self is not dual. If we wish to avoid an infinite

regress, there must be an immediate, non-cognitive relation of the self to itself.

Furthermore the reflecting consciousness posits the consciousness reflected-on, as its object. In the act of reflecting I pass judgment on the consciousness reflected-on; I am ashamed of it, I am proud of it, I will it, I deny it, etc. The immediate consciousness which I have of perceiving does not permit me either to judge or to will or to be ashamed. It does not know my perception, does not posit it; all that there is of intention in my actual consciousness is directed toward the outside, toward the world. In turn, this spontaneous consciousness of my perception is constitutive of my perceptive consciousness. In other words, every positional consciousness of an object is at the same time a non-positional consciousness of itself. If I count the cigarettes which are in that case, I have the impression of disclosing an objective property of this collection of cigarettes: *they are a dozen*. This property appears to my consciousness as a property existing in the world. It is very possible that I have no positional consciousness of counting them. Then I do not know myself as counting. Proof of this is that children who are capable of making an addition spontaneously can not *explain* subsequently how they set about it. Piaget's tests, which show this, constitute an excellent refutation of the formula of Alain—To know is to know that one knows. Yet at the moment when these cigarettes are revealed to me as a dozen, I have a non-thetic consciousness of my adding activity. If anyone questioned me, indeed, if anyone should ask, "What are you doing there?" I should reply at once, "I am counting." This reply aims not only at the instantaneous consciousness which I can achieve by reflection but at those fleeting consciousnesses which have passed without being reflected-on, those which are forever not-reflected-on in my immediate past. Thus reflection has no kind of primacy over the consciousness reflected-on. It is not reflection which reveals the consciousness reflected-on to itself. Quite the contrary, it is the non-reflective consciousness which renders the reflection possible; there is a pre-reflective cogito which is the condition of the Cartesian cogito. At the same time it is the non-thetic consciousness of counting which is the very condition of my act of adding. If it were otherwise, how would the addition be the unifying theme of my consciousnesses? In order that this theme should preside over a whole series of syntheses of unifications and recognitions, it must be present to itself, not as a thing but as an operative intention which can exist only as the revealing-revealed (*révélante-révélee*), to use an expression of Heidegger's. Thus in order to count, it is necessary to be conscious of counting.

Of course, someone may say, but this makes a circle. For is it not necessary that I count *in fact* in order to be conscious of counting? That is true. However there is no circle, or if you like, it is the very nature of consciousness to exist "in a circle." The idea can be expressed in these

terms: Every conscious existence exists as consciousness of existing. We understand now why the first consciousness of consciousness is not positional; it is because it is one with the consciousness of which it is consciousness. At one stroke it determines itself as consciousness of perception and as perception. The necessity of syntax has compelled us hitherto to speak of the "non-positional consciousness of self." But we can no longer use this expression in which the "of self" still evokes the idea of knowledge. (Henceforth we shall put the "of" inside parentheses to show that it merely satisfies a grammatical requirement.)⁴

This self-consciousness we ought to consider not as a new consciousness, but as *the only mode of existence which is possible for a consciousness of something*. Just as an extended object is compelled to exist according to three dimensions, so an intention, a pleasure, a grief can exist only as immediate self-consciousness. If the intention is not a thing in consciousness, then the being of the intention can be only consciousness. It is not necessary to understand by this that on the one hand, some external cause (an organic trouble, an unconscious impulse, another *Erlebnis*) could determine that a psychic event—a pleasure, for example,—produce itself, and that on the other hand, this event so determined in its material structure should be compelled to produce itself as self-consciousness. This would be to make the non-thetic consciousness a quality of the positional consciousness (in the sense that the perception, positional consciousness of that table, would have as addition the quality of self-consciousness) and would thus fall back into the illusion of the theoretical primacy of knowledge. This would be moreover to make the psychic event a thing and to qualify it with "conscious" just as I can qualify this blotter with "red." Pleasure can not be distinguished—even logically—from consciousness of pleasure. Consciousness (of) pleasure is constitutive of the pleasure as the very mode of its own existence, as the material of which it is made, and not as a form which is imposed by a blow upon a hedonistic material. Pleasure can not exist "before" consciousness of pleasure—not even in the form of potentiality or potency. A potential pleasure can exist only as consciousness (of) being potential. Potencies of consciousness exist only as consciousness of potencies.

Conversely, as I showed earlier, we must avoid defining pleasure by the consciousness which I have of it. This would be to fall into an idealism of consciousness which would bring us by indirect means to the primacy of knowledge. Pleasure must not disappear behind its own self-consciousness; it is not a representation, it is a concrete event, full and absolute. It is no more a quality of self-consciousness than self-consciousness is a quality of pleasure. There is no more first a consciousness which receives subsequently the affect "pleasure" like water which one stains, than there is first a

⁴ Since English syntax does not require the "of," I shall henceforth freely translate *conscience (de) soi* as "self-consciousness." Tr.

pleasure (unconscious or psychological) which receives subsequently the quality of "conscious" like a pencil of light rays. There is an indivisible, indissoluble being—definitely not a substance supporting its qualities like particles of being, but a being which is existence through and through. Pleasure is the being of self-consciousness and this self-consciousness is the law of being of pleasure. This is what Heidegger expressed very well when he wrote (though speaking of *Dasein*, not of consciousness): "The 'how' (*essentia*) of this being, so far as it is possible to speak of it generally, must be conceived in terms of its existence (*existentia*)." This means that consciousness is not produced as a particular instance of an abstract possibility but that in rising to the center of being, it creates and supports its essence—that is, the synthetic order of its possibilities.

This means also that the type of being of consciousness is the opposite of that which the ontological proof reveals to us. Since consciousness is not possible before being, but since its being is the source and condition of all possibility, its existence implies its essence. Husserl expresses this aptly in speaking of the "necessity of fact." In order for there to be an essence of pleasure, there must be first the fact of a consciousness (of) this pleasure. It is futile to try to invoke pretended laws of consciousness of which the articulated whole would constitute the essence. A law is a transcendent object of knowledge; there can be consciousness of a law, not a law of consciousness. For the same reasons it is impossible to assign to a consciousness a motivation other than itself. Otherwise it would be necessary to conceive that consciousness to the degree to which it is an effect, is not conscious (of) itself. It would be necessary in some manner that it should be without being conscious (of) being. We should fall into that too common illusion which makes consciousness semi-conscious or a passivity. But consciousness is consciousness through and through. It can be limited only by itself.

This self-determination of consciousness must not be conceived as a genesis, as a becoming, for that would force us to suppose that consciousness is prior to its own existence. Neither is it necessary to conceive of this self-creation as an act, for in that case consciousness would be conscious (of) itself as an act, which it is not. Consciousness is a plenum of existence, and this determination of itself by itself is an essential characteristic. It would even be wise not to misuse the expression "cause of self," which allows us to suppose a progression, a relation of self-cause to self-effect. It would be more exact to say very simply: The existence of consciousness comes from consciousness itself. By that we need not understand that consciousness "derives from nothingness." There can not be "nothingness of consciousness" before consciousness. "Before" consciousness one can conceive only of a plenum of being of which no element can refer to an absent consciousness. If there is to be nothingness of conscious-

ness, there must be a consciousness which has been and which is no more and a witnessing consciousness which poses the nothingness of the first consciousness for a synthesis of recognition. Consciousness is prior to nothingness and "is derived" from being.⁵

One will perhaps have some difficulty in accepting these conclusions. But considered more carefully, they will appear perfectly clear. The paradox is not that there are "self-activated" existences but that there is no other kind. What is truly unthinkable is passive existence; that is, existence which perpetuates itself without having the force either to produce itself or to preserve itself. From this point of view there is nothing more incomprehensible than the principle of inertia. Indeed where would consciousness "come" from if it did "come" from something? From the limbo of the unconscious or of the physiological. But if we ask ourselves how this limbo in its turn can exist and where it derives its existence, we find ourselves faced with the concept of passive existence; that is, we can no more absolutely understand how this non-conscious given (unconscious or physiological) which does not derive its existence from itself, can nevertheless perpetuate this existence and find in addition the ability to produce a consciousness. This demonstrates the great favor which the proof a *contingentia mundi* has enjoyed.

Thus by abandoning the primacy of knowledge, we have discovered the *being* of the knower and encountered the absolute, that same absolute which the rationalists of the seventeenth century had defined and logically constituted as an object of knowledge. But precisely because the question concerns an absolute of existence and not of knowledge, it is not subject to that famous objection according to which a known absolute is no longer an absolute because it becomes relative to the knowledge which one has of it. In fact the absolute here is not the result of a logical construction on the ground of knowledge but the subject of the most concrete of experiences. And it is not at all relative to this experience because it is this experience. Likewise it is a non-substantial absolute. The ontological error of Cartesian rationalism is not to have seen that if the absolute is defined by the primacy of existence over essence, it can not be conceived as a substance. Consciousness has nothing substantial, it is pure "appearance" in the sense that it exists only to the degree to which it appears. But it is precisely because consciousness is pure appearance, because it is total emptiness (since the entire world is outside it)—it is because of this identity of appearance and existence within it that it can be considered as the absolute.

⁵ That certainly does not mean that consciousness is the foundation of its being. On the contrary, as we shall see later, there is a full contingency of the being of consciousness. We wish only to show (1) That *nothing* is the cause of consciousness. (2) That consciousness is the cause of its own way of being.

IV. THE BEING OF THE PERCIPI

It seems that we have arrived at the goal of our inquiry. We have reduced things to the united totality of their appearances, and we have established that these appearances lay claim to a being which is no longer itself appearance. The "percipi" referred us to a *percipiens*, the being of which has been revealed to us as consciousness. Thus we have attained the ontological foundation of knowledge, the first being to whom all other appearances appear, the absolute in relation to which every phenomenon is relative. This is no longer the subject in Kant's meaning of the term, but it is subjectivity itself, the immanence of self in self. Henceforth we have escaped idealism. For the latter, being is measured by knowledge, which subjects it to the law of duality. There is only *known* being; it is a question of thought itself. Thought appears only through its own products; that is, we always apprehend it only as the signification of thoughts produced, and the philosopher in quest of thought must question the established sciences in order to derive it from them as the condition of their possibility. We, on the other hand, have apprehended a being which is not subject to knowledge and which founds knowledge, a thought which is definitely not given as a representation or a signification of expressed thoughts, but which is directly apprehended such as it is—and this mode of apprehension is not a phenomenon of knowledge but is the structure of being. We find ourselves at present on the ground of the phenomenology of Husserl although Husserl himself has not always been faithful to his first intuition. Are we satisfied? We have encountered a *transphenomenal* being, but is it actually the being to which the phenomenon of being refers? Is it indeed the being of the phenomenon? In other words is consciousness sufficient to provide the foundation for the appearance *qua* appearance? We have extracted its being from the phenomenon in order to give it to consciousness, and we anticipated that consciousness would subsequently restore it to the phenomenon. Is this possible? We shall find our answer in the examination of the ontological exigencies of the *percipi*.

Let us note first that there is a being of the thing perceived—as perceived. Even if I wished to reduce this table to a synthesis of subjective impressions, I must at least remark that it reveals itself *qua* table through this synthesis, that it is the transcendent limit of the synthesis, the reason for it and its end. The table is before knowledge and can not be identified with the knowledge which we have of it; otherwise it would be consciousness—*i.e.*, pure immanence—and it would disappear as table. For the same cause even if a pure distinction of reason is to separate the table from the synthesis of subjective impressions through which I apprehend it, at least it can not be this synthesis; that would be to reduce

it to a synthetic activity of connection. In so far then as the known can not be reabsorbed into knowledge, we must discover for it a being. This being, we are told, is the *percipi*. Let us recognize first of all that the being of the *percipi* can not be reduced to that of the *percipiens*—i.e., to consciousness—any more than the table is reduced to the bond of representations. At most we can say that it is relative to this being. But this relativity does not render unnecessary an examination of the being of the *percipi*.

Now the mode of the *percipi* is the passive. If then the being of the phenomenon resides in its *percipi*, this being is passivity. Relativity and passivity—such are the characteristic structures of the *esse* in so far as this is reduced to the *percipi*. What is passivity? I am passive when I undergo a modification of which I am not the origin; that is, neither the source nor the creator. Thus my being supports a mode of being of which it is not the source. Yet in order for me to support, it is still necessary that I exist, and due to this fact my existence is always situated on the other side of passivity. "To support passively," for example, is a conduct which I assume and which engages my liberty as much as to "reject resolutely." If I am to be for always "the-one-who-has-been-offended," I must persevere in my being; that is, I myself assume my existence. But all the same I respond on my own account in some way and I assume my offense; I cease to be passive in relation to it. Hence we have this choice of alternatives: either, indeed, I am not passive in my being, in which case I become the foundation of my affections even if at first I have not been the origin of them—or I am affected with passivity in my very existence, my being is a received being, and hence all falls into nothingness. Thus passivity is a doubly relative phenomenon, relative to the activity of the one who acts and to the existence of the one who suffers. This implies that passivity can not affect the actual being of the passive existent; it is a relation of one being to another being and not of one being to a nothingness. It is impossible that *the percipere* affects *the perceptum* of being, for in order for the *perceptum* to be affected it would of necessity have to be already given in some way and exist before having received being. One can conceive of a creation on condition that the created being recover itself, tear itself away from the creator in order to close in on itself immediately and assume its being; it is in this sense that a book exists as distinct from its author. But if the act of creation is to be continued indefinitely, if the created being is to be supported even in its inmost parts, if it does not have its own independence, if it is *in itself* only nothingness—then the creature is in no way distinguished from its creator; it is absorbed in him; we are dealing with a false transcendence, and the creator can not have even an illusion of getting out of his subjectivity.⁶

⁶ It is for this reason that the Cartesian doctrine of substance finds its logical culmination in the work of Spinoza.

Furthermore the passivity of the recipient demands an equal passivity on the part of the agent. This is expressed in the principle of action and reaction; it is because my hand can be crushed, grasped, cut, that my hand can crush, cut, grasp. What element of passivity can we assign to perception, to knowledge? They are all activity, all spontaneity. It is precisely because it is pure spontaneity, because nothing can get a grip on it that consciousness can not act upon anything. Thus the *esse est percipi* would require that consciousness, pure spontaneity which can not act upon anything, give being to a transcendent nothingness, at the same time keeping it in its state of nothingness. So much nonsense! Husserl has attempted to overcome these objections by introducing passivity into the *noesis*; this is the *hyle* or pure flux of experience and the matter of the passive syntheses. But he has only added an additional difficulty to those which we have mentioned. He has introduced in fact those neutral givens, the impossibility of which we have shown earlier. To be sure, these are not "contents" of consciousness, but they remain only so much the more unintelligible. The *hyle* in fact could not be consciousness, for it would disappear in translucency and could not offer that resisting basis of impressions which must be surpassed toward the object. But if it does not belong to consciousness, where does it derive its being and its opacity? How can it preserve at once the opaque resistance of things and the subjectivity of thought? Its *esse* can not come to it from a *percipi* since it is not even perceived, for consciousness transcends it toward the objects. But if the *hyle* derives its being from itself alone, we meet once again the insoluble problem of the connection of consciousness with existents independent of it. Even if we grant to Husserl that there is *hyletic stratum* for the *noesis*, we can not conceive how consciousness can transcend this subjective toward objectivity. In giving to the *hyle* both the characteristics of a thing and the characteristics of consciousness, Husserl believed that he facilitated the passage from the one to the other, but he succeeded only in creating a hybrid being which consciousness rejects and which can not be a part of the world.

Furthermore, as we have seen, the *percipi* implies that the law of being of the *perceptum* is relativity. Can we conceive that the being of the thing known is relative to the knowledge? What can the relativity of being mean for an existent if not that the existent has its own being in something other than in itself; that is, *in an existent which it is not*. Certainly it would not be inconceivable that a being should be external to itself if one means that this being is *its own externality*. But such is not the case here. The perceived being is before consciousness; consciousness can not reach it, and it can not enter into consciousness; and as the perceived being is cut off from consciousness, it exists cut off from its own existence. It would be no use to make of it an unreal in the manner of Husserl; even as unreal it must exist.

Thus the two determinations of relativity and of passivity, which can concern modes of being, can on no account apply to being. The *esse* of the phenomenon can not be its *percipi*. The transphenomenal being of consciousness can not provide a basis for the transphenomenal being of the phenomenon. Here we see the error of the phenomenologists: having justifiably reduced the object to the connected series of its appearances, they believed they had reduced its being to the succession of its modes of being. That is why they have explained it by concepts which can be applied only to the modes of being, for they are pointing out the relations between a plurality of already existing beings.

V. THE ONTOLOGICAL PROOF

BEING has not been given its due. We believed we had dispensed with granting transphenomenality to the being of the phenomenon because we had discovered the transphenomenality of the being of consciousness. We are going to see, on the contrary, that this very transphenomenality requires that of the being of the phenomenon. There is an "ontological proof" to be derived not from the reflective *cogito* but from the pre-reflective being of the *percipiens*. This we shall now try to demonstrate.

All consciousness is consciousness of something. This definition of consciousness can be taken in two very distinct senses: either we understand by this that consciousness is constitutive of the being of its object, or it means that consciousness in its inmost nature is a relation to a transcendent being. But the first interpretation of the formula destroys itself: to be conscious of something is to be confronted with a concrete and full presence which is not consciousness. Of course one can be conscious of an absence. But this absence appears necessarily as a pre-condition of presence. As we have seen, consciousness is a real subjectivity and the impression is a subjective plenitude. But this subjectivity can not go out of itself to posit a transcendent object in such a way as to endow it with a plenitude of impressions.⁷ If then we wish at any price to make the being of the phenomenon depend on consciousness, the object must be distinguished from consciousness not by its presence but by its absence, not by its plenitude, but by its nothingness. If being belongs to consciousness, the object is not consciousness, not to the extent that it is another being, but that it is non-being. This is the appeal to the infinite of which we spoke in the first section of this work. For Husserl, for example, the animation of the hyletic nucleus by the only intentions which can find their fulfilment (*Erfüllung*) in this hyle is not enough to bring us outside of subjectivity. The truly objectifying intentions are empty intentions, those which aim

⁷ I.e., in such a way that the impressions are objectified into qualities of the thing. Tr.

beyond the present subjective appearance at the infinite totality of the series of appearances.

We must further understand that the intentions aim at appearances which are never to be given at one time. It is an impossibility on principle for the terms of an infinite series to exist all at the same time before consciousness, along with the real absence of all these terms except for the one which is the foundation of objectivity. If present these impressions—even in infinite number—would dissolve in the subjective; it is their absence which gives them objective being. Thus the being of the object is pure non-being. It is defined as a *lack*. It is that which escapes, that which by definition will never be given, that which offers itself only in fleeting and successive profiles.

But how can non-being be the foundation of being? How can the absent, expected subjective become thereby the objective? A great joy which I hope for, a grief which I dread, acquire from that fact a certain transcendence. This I admit. But that transcendence in immanence does not bring us out of the subjective. It is true that things give themselves in profile; that is, simply by appearances. And it is true that each appearance refers to other appearances. But each of them is already in itself alone a *transcendent being*, not a subjective material of impressions—a *plenitude of being*, not a *lack*—a *presence*, not an absence. It is futile by a sleight of hand to attempt to found the reality of the object on the subjective plenitude of impressions and its *objectivity* on non-being; the objective will never come out of the subjective nor the transcendent from immanence, nor being from non-being. But, we are told, Husserl defines consciousness precisely as a transcendence. In truth he does. This is what he posits. This is his essential discovery. But from the moment that he makes of the *noema* an *unreal*, a correlate of the *noesis*, a *noema* whose *esse* is *percipi*, he is totally unfaithful to his principle.

Consciousness is consciousness of something. This means that transcendence is the constitutive structure of consciousness; that is, that consciousness is born supported by a being which is not itself. This is what we call the ontological proof. No doubt someone will reply that the existence of the demand of consciousness does not prove that this demand ought to be satisfied. But this objection can not hold up against an analysis of what Husserl calls intentionality, though, to be sure, he misunderstood its essential character. To say that consciousness is consciousness of something means that for consciousness there is no being outside of that precise obligation to be a revealing intuition of something—*i.e.*, of a transcendent being. Not only does pure subjectivity, if initially given, fail to transcend itself to posit the objective; a “pure” subjectivity disappears. What can properly be called subjectivity is consciousness (of) consciousness. But this consciousness (of being) consciousness must be qualified in some way, and it can be qualified only as revealing intuition or it is nothing. Now

a revealing intuition implies something revealed. Absolute subjectivity can be established only in the face of something revealed; immanence can be defined only within the apprehension of a transcendent. It might appear that there is an echo here of Kant's refutation of problematical idealism. But we ought rather to think of Descartes. We are here on the ground of being, not of knowledge. It is not a question of showing that the phenomena of inner sense imply the existence of objective spatial phenomena, but that consciousness implies in its being a non-conscious and transphenomenal being. In particular there is no point in replying that in fact subjectivity implies objectivity and that it constitutes itself in constituting the objective; we have seen that subjectivity is powerless to constitute the objective. To say that consciousness is consciousness of something is to say that it must produce itself as a revealed-revelation of a being which is not it and which gives itself as already existing when consciousness reveals it.

Thus we have left pure appearance and have arrived at full being. Consciousness is a being whose existence posits its essence, and inversely it is consciousness of a being, whose essence implies its existence; that is, in which appearance lays claim to *being*. Being is everywhere. Certainly we could apply to consciousness the definition which Heidegger reserves for *Dasein* and say that it is a being such that in its being, its being is in question. But it would be necessary to complete the definition and formulate it more like this: *consciousness is a being such that in its being, its being is in question in so far as this being implies a being other than itself.*

We must understand that this being is no other than the transphenomenal being of phenomena and not a noumenal being which is hidden behind them. It is the being of this table, of this package of tobacco, of the lamp, more generally the being of the world which is implied by consciousness. It requires simply that the being of that which appears does not exist *only* in so far as it appears. The transphenomenal being of what exists for consciousness is itself in itself (*lui-même en soi*).

VI. BEING-IN-ITSELF

WE can now form a few definite conclusions about the *phenomenon of being*, which we have considered in order to make the preceding observations. Consciousness is the revealed-revelation of existents, and existents appear before consciousness on the foundation of their being. Nevertheless the primary characteristic of the being of an existent is never to reveal itself completely to consciousness. An existent can not be stripped of its being; being is the ever present foundation of the existent; it is everywhere in it and nowhere. There is no being which is not the being of a certain mode of being, none which can not be apprehended through the

mode of being which manifests being and veils it at the same time. Consciousness can always pass beyond the existent, not toward its being, but toward the *meaning of this being*. That is why we call it ontic-ontological, since a fundamental characteristic of its transcendence is to transcend the ontic toward the ontological. The meaning of the being of the existent in so far as it reveals itself to consciousness is the phenomenon of being. This meaning has itself a being, based on which it manifests itself.

It is from this point of view that we can understand the famous Scholastic argument according to which there is a vicious circle in every proposition which concerns being, since any judgment about being already implies being. But in actuality there is no vicious circle, for it is not necessary again to pass beyond the being of this meaning toward its meaning; the meaning of being is valid for the being of every phenomenon, including its own being. The phenomenon of being is not being, as we have already noted. But it indicates being and requires it—although, in truth, the ontological proof which we mentioned above is not valid especially or uniquely for it; there is one ontological proof valid for the whole domain of consciousness. But this proof is sufficient to justify all the information which we can derive from the phenomenon of being. The phenomenon of being, like every primary phenomenon, is immediately disclosed to consciousness. We have at each instant what Heidegger calls a pre-ontological comprehension of it; that is, one which is not accompanied by a fixing in concepts and elucidation. For us at present, then, there is no question of considering this phenomenon for the sake of trying to fix the meaning of being. We must observe always:

(1) That this elucidation of the meaning of being is valid only for the being of the phenomenon. Since the being of consciousness is radically different, its meaning will necessitate a particular elucidation, in terms of the revealed-revelation of another type of being, being-for-itself (*l'être-pour-soi*), which we shall define later and which is opposed to the being-in-itself (*l'être-en-soi*) of the phenomenon.

(2) That the elucidation of the meaning of being-in-itself which we are going to attempt here can be only provisional. The aspects which will be revealed *imply* other significations which ultimately we must apprehend and determine. In particular the preceding reflections have permitted us to distinguish two absolutely separated regions of being: the being of the *pre-reflective cogito* and the being of the phenomenon. But although the concept of being has this peculiarity of being divided into two regions without communication, we must nevertheless explain how these two regions can be placed under the same heading. That will necessitate the investigation of these two types of being, and it is evident that we can not truly grasp the meaning of either one until we can establish their true connection with the notion of being in general and the relations which unite them. We have indeed established by the examina-

tion of non-positional self-consciousness that the being of the phenomenon can on no account act upon consciousness. In this way we have ruled out a realistic conception of the relations of the phenomenon with consciousness.

We have shown also by the examination of the spontaneity of the non-reflective cogito that consciousness can not get out of its subjectivity if the latter has been initially given, and that consciousness can not act upon transcendent being nor without contradiction admit of the passive elements necessary in order to constitute a transcendent being arising from them. Thus we have ruled out the idealist solution of the problem. It appears that we have barred all doors and that we are now condemned to regard transcendent being and consciousness as two closed totalities without possible communication. It will be necessary to show that the problem allows a solution other than realism or idealism.

A certain number of characteristics can be fixed on immediately because for the most part they follow naturally from what we have just said.

A clear view of the phenomenon of being has often been obscured by a very common prejudice which we shall call "creationism." Since people supposed that God had given being to the world, being always appeared tainted with a certain passivity. But a creation *ex nihilo* can not explain the coming to pass of being; for if being is conceived in a subjectivity, even a divine subjectivity, it remains a mode of intra-subjective being. Such subjectivity can not have even the representation of an objectivity, and consequently it can not even be affected with the will to create the objective. Furthermore being, if it is suddenly placed outside the subjective by the fulguration of which Leibniz speaks, can only affirm itself as distinct from and opposed to its creator; otherwise it dissolves in him. The theory of perpetual creation, by removing from being what the Germans call *Selbständigkeit*, makes it disappear in the divine subjectivity. If being exists as over against God, it is its own support; it does not preserve the least trace of divine creation. In a word, even if it had been created, being-in-itself would be *inexplicable* in terms of creation; for it assumes its being beyond the creation.

This is equivalent to saying that being is uncreated. But we need not conclude that being creates itself, which would suppose that it is prior to itself. Being can not be *causa sui* in the manner of consciousness. Being is *itself*. This means that it is neither passivity nor activity. Both of these notions are human and designate human conduct or the instruments of human conduct. There is activity when a conscious being uses means with an end in view. And we call those objects passive on which our activity is exercised, in as much as they do not spontaneously aim at the end which we make them serve. In a word, man is active and the means which he employs are called passive. These concepts, put absolutely, lose all meaning. In particular, being is not active; in order for there to be an end

and means, there must be being. For an even stronger reason it can not be passive, for in order to be passive, it must be. The self-consistency of being is beyond the active as it is beyond the passive.

Being is equally beyond negation as beyond affirmation. Affirmation is always affirmation of something; that is, the act of affirming is distinguished from the thing affirmed. But if we suppose an affirmation in which the affirmed comes to fulfill the affirming and is confused with it, this affirmation can not be affirmed—owing to too much of plenitude and the immediate inherence of the noema in the noesis. It is there that we find being—if we are to define it more clearly—in connection with consciousness. It is the noema in the noesis; that is, the inherence in itself without the least distance. From this point of view, we should not call it “immanence,” for immanence in spite of all connection with self is still that very slight withdrawal which can be realized—away from the self. But being is not a connection with itself. It is *itself*. It is an immanence which can not realize itself, an affirmation which can not affirm itself, an activity which can not act, because it is glued to itself. Everything happens as if, in order to free the affirmation of self from the heart of being, there is necessary a decompression of being. Let us not, however, think that being is merely one undifferentiated self-affirmation; the undifferentiation of the in-itself is beyond an infinity of self-affirmations, inasmuch as there is an infinity of modes of self-affirming. We may summarize these first conclusions by saying that being is in itself.

But if being is in itself, this means that it does not refer to itself as self-consciousness does. It is this self. It is itself so completely that the perpetual reflection which constitutes the self is dissolved in an identity. That is why being is at bottom beyond the *self*, and our first formula can be only an approximation due to the requirements of language. In fact being is opaque to itself precisely because it is filled with itself. This can be better expressed by saying that *being is what it is*. This statement is in appearance strictly analytical. Actually it is far from being reduced to that principle of identity which is the unconditioned principle of all analytical judgments. First the formula designates a particular region of being, that of *being in-itself*. We shall see that the being of *for-itself* is defined, on the contrary, as being what it is not and not being what it is. The question here then is of a regional principle and is as such synthetical. Furthermore it is necessary to oppose this formula—being in-itself is what it is—to that which designates the being of consciousness. The latter in fact, as we shall see, has to be what it is.

This instructs us as to the special meaning which must be given to the “is” in the phrase, *being is what it is*. From the moment that beings exist who have to be what they are, the fact of being what they are is no longer a purely axiomatic characteristic; it is a contingent principle of being in-itself. In this sense, the principle of identity, the principle of ana-

lytical judgments, is also a regional synthetical principle of being. It designates the opacity of being-in-itself. This opacity has nothing to do with our position in relation to the in-itself; it is not that we are obliged to apprehend it and to observe it because we are "without." Being-in-itself has no *within* which is opposed to a *without* and which is analogous to a judgment, a law, a consciousness of itself. The in-itself has nothing secret; it is *solid* (*massif*). In a sense we can designate it as a synthesis. But it is the most indissoluble of all: the synthesis of itself with itself.

The result is evidently that being is isolated in its being and that it does not enter into any connection with what is not itself. Transition, becoming, anything which permits us to say that being is not yet what it will be and that it is already what it is not—all that is forbidden on principle. For being is the being of becoming and due to this fact it is beyond becoming. It is what it is. This means that by itself it can not even be what it is not; we have seen indeed that it can encompass no negation. It is full positivity. It knows no otherness; it never posits itself as *other-than-another-being*. It can support no connection with the other. It is itself indefinitely and it exhausts itself in being. From this point of view we shall see later that it is not subject to temporality. It is, and when it gives way, one can not even say that it no longer is. Or, at least, a consciousness can be conscious of it as no longer being, precisely because consciousness is temporal. But being itself does not exist as a lack there where it was; the full positivity of being is re-formed on its giving way. It was and at present other beings are: that is all.

Finally—this will be our third characteristic—being-in-itself is. This means that being can neither be derived from the possible nor reduced to the necessary. Necessity concerns the connection between ideal propositions but not that of existents. An existing phenomenon can never be derived from another existent qua existent. This is what we shall call the *contingency* of being-in-itself. But neither can being-in-itself be derived from a *possibility*. The possible is a structure of the *for-itself*; that is, it belongs to the other region of being. Being-in-itself is never either possible or impossible. It is. This is what consciousness expresses in anthropomorphic terms by saying that being is superfluous (*de trop*)—that is, that consciousness absolutely can not derive being from anything, either from another being, or from a possibility, or from a necessary law. Uncreated, without reason for being, without any connection with another being, being-in-itself is *de trop* for eternity.

Being is. Being is in-itself. Being is what it is. These are the three characteristics which the preliminary examination of the phenomenon of being allows us to assign to the being of phenomena. For the moment it is impossible to push our investigation further. This is not yet the examination of the *in-itself*—which is never anything but what it is—which will allow us to establish and to explain its relations with the for-

itself. Thus we have left "appearances" and have been led progressively to posit two types of being, the in-itself and the for-itself, concerning which we have as yet only superficial and incomplete information. A multitude of questions remain unanswered: What is the ultimate meaning of these two types of being? For what reasons do they both belong to being in general? What is the meaning of that being which includes within itself these two radically separated regions of being? If idealism and realism both fail to explain the relations which *in fact* unite these regions which *in theory* are without communication, what other solution can we find for this problem? And how can the being of the phenomenon be trans-phenomenal?

It is to attempt to reply to these questions that I have written the present work.

PART ONE

The Problem of Nothingness

CHAPTER ONE

The Origin of Negation

I. THE QUESTION

OUR inquiry has led us to the heart of being. But we have been brought to an impasse since we have not been able to establish the connection between the two regions of being which we have discovered. No doubt this is because we have chosen an unfortunate approach. Descartes found himself faced with an analogous problem when he had to deal with the relation between soul and body. He planned then to look for the solution on that level where the union of thinking substance and extended substance was actually effected—that is, in the imagination. His advice is valuable. To be sure, our concern is not that of Descartes and we do not conceive of imagination as he did. But what we can retain is the reminder that it is not profitable first to separate the two terms of a relation in order to try to join them together again later. The relation is a synthesis. Consequently the *results* of analysis can not be covered over again by the *moments* of this synthesis.

M. Laporte says that an abstraction is made when something not capable of existing in isolation is thought of as in an isolated state. The concrete by contrast is a totality which can exist by itself alone. Husserl is of the same opinion; for him red is an abstraction because color can not exist without form. On the other hand, a spatial-temporal *thing*, with all its determinations, is an example of the concrete. From this point of view, consciousness is an abstraction since it conceals within itself an ontological source in the region of the in-itself, and conversely the phenomenon is likewise an abstraction since it must “appear” to consciousness. The concrete can be only the synthetic totality of which consciousness, like the phenomenon, constitutes only moments. The concrete is man within the world in that specific union of man with the world which Heidegger, for example, calls “being-in-the-world.” We deliberately begin with the abstract if we question “experience” as Kant does, inquiring into the conditions of its possibility—or if we effect a phenomenological reduction

like Husserl, who would reduce the world to the state of the noema-correlate of consciousness. But we will no more succeed in restoring the concrete by the summation or organization of the elements which we have abstracted from it than Spinoza can reach substance by the infinite summation of its modes.

The relation of the regions of being is an original emergence and is a part of the very structure of these beings. But we discovered this in our first observations. It is enough now to open our eyes and question ingeniously this totality which is man-in-the-world. It is by the description of this totality that we shall be able to reply to these two questions: (1) What is the synthetic relation which we call being-in-the-world? (2) What must man and the world be in order for a relation between them to be possible? In truth, the two questions are interdependent, and we can not hope to reply to them separately. But each type of human conduct, being the conduct of man in the world, can release for us simultaneously man, the world, and the relation which unites them, only on condition that we envisage these forms of conduct as realities objectively apprehensible and not as subjective affects which disclose themselves only in the face of reflection.

We shall not limit ourselves to the study of a single pattern of conduct. We shall try on the contrary to describe several and proceeding from one kind of conduct to another, attempt to penetrate into the profound meaning of the relation "man-world." But first of all we should choose a single pattern which can serve us as a guiding thread in our inquiry.

Now this very inquiry furnishes us with the desired conduct; this man that I am—if I apprehend him such as he is at this moment in the world, I establish that he stands before being in an attitude of interrogation. At the very moment when I ask, "Is there any conduct which can reveal to me the relation of man with the world?" I pose a question. This question I can consider objectively, for it matters little whether the questioner is myself or the reader who reads my work and who is questioning along with me. But on the other hand, the question is not simply the objective totality of the words printed on this page; it is indifferent to the symbols which express it. In a word, it is a human attitude filled with meaning. What does this attitude reveal to us?

In every question we stand before a being which we are questioning. Every question presupposes a being who questions and a being which is questioned. This is not the original relation of man to being-in-itself, but rather it stands within the limitations of this relation and takes it for granted. On the other hand, this being which we question, we question about something. That about which I question the being participates in the transcendence of being. I question being about its ways of being or about its being. From this point of view the question is a kind of expectation; I expect a reply from the being questioned. That is, on the basis

of a pre-interrogative familiarity with being, I expect from this being a revelation of its being or of its way of being. The reply will be a "yes" or a "no." It is the existence of these two equally objective and contradictory possibilities which on principle distinguishes the question from affirmation or negation. There are questions which on the surface do not permit a negative reply—like, for example, the one which we put earlier, "What does this attitude reveal to us?" But actually we see that it is always possible with questions of this type to reply, "Nothing" or "Nobody" or "Never." Thus at the moment when I ask, "Is there any conduct which can reveal to me the relation of man with the world?" I admit on principle the possibility of a negative reply such as, "No, such a conduct does not exist." This means that we admit to being faced with the transcendent fact of the non-existence of such conduct.

One will perhaps be tempted not to believe in the objective existence of a non-being; one will say that in this case the fact simply refers me to my subjectivity; I would learn from the transcendent being that the conduct sought is a pure fiction. But in the first place, to call this conduct a pure fiction is to disguise the negation without removing it. "To be pure fiction" is equivalent here to "to be only a fiction." Consequently to destroy the reality of the negation is to cause the reality of the reply to disappear. This reply, in fact, is the very being which gives it to me; that is, reveals the negation to me. There exists then for the questioner the permanent objective possibility of a negative reply. In relation to this possibility the questioner by the very fact that he is questioning, posits himself as in a state of indetermination; he does not know whether the reply will be affirmative or negative. Thus the question is a bridge set up between two non-beings: the non-being of knowing in man, the possibility of non-being of being in transcendent being. Finally the question implies the existence of a truth. By the very question the questioner affirms that he expects an objective reply, such that we can say of it, "It is thus and not otherwise." In a word the truth, as differentiated from being, introduces a third non-being as determining the question—the non-being of limitation. This triple non-being conditions every question and in particular the metaphysical question, which is our question.

We set out upon our pursuit of being, and it seemed to us that the series of our questions had led us to the heart of being. But behold, at the moment when we thought we were arriving at the goal, a glance cast on the question itself has revealed to us suddenly that we are encompassed with nothingness. The permanent possibility of non-being, outside us and within, conditions our questions about being. Furthermore it is non-being which is going to limit the reply. What being *will be* must of necessity arise on the basis of what it is not. Whatever being is, it will allow this formulation: "Being is *that* and outside of that, *nothing*."

Thus a new component of the real has just appeared to us—non-being.

Our problem is thereby complicated, for we may no longer limit our inquiry to the relations of the human being to being-in-itself, but must include also the relations of being with non-being and the relations of human non-being with transcendent-being. But let us consider further.

II. NEGATIONS

SOMEONE will object that being-in-itself can not furnish negative replies. Did not we ourselves say that it was beyond affirmation as beyond negation? Furthermore ordinary experience reduced to itself does not seem to disclose any non-being to us. I think that there are fifteen hundred francs in my wallet, and I find only thirteen hundred; that does not mean, someone will tell us, that experience had discovered for me the non-being of fifteen hundred francs but simply that I have counted thirteen hundred-franc notes. Negation proper (we are told) is unthinkable; it could appear only on the level of an act of judgment by which I should establish a comparison between the result anticipated and the result obtained. Thus negation would be simply a quality of judgment and the expectation of the questioner would be an expectation of the judgment-response. As for Nothingness, this would derive its origin from negative judgments; it would be a concept establishing the transcendent unity of all these judgments, a propositional function of the type, "X is not."

We see where this theory is leading; its proponents would make us conclude that being-in-itself is full positivity and does not contain in itself any negation. This negative judgment, on the other hand, by virtue of being a subjective act, is strictly identified with the affirmative judgment. They can not see that Kant, for example, has distinguished in its internal texture the negative act of judgment from the affirmative act. In each case a synthesis of concepts is operative; that synthesis, which is a concrete and full event of psychic life, is operative here merely in the manner of the copula "is" and there in the manner of the copula "is not." In the same way the manual operation of sorting out (separation) and the manual operation of assembling (union) are two objective conducts which possess the same reality of fact. Thus negation would be "at the end" of the act of judgment without, however, being "in" being. It is like an unreal encompassed by two full realities neither of which claims it; being-in-itself, if questioned about negation, refers to judgment, since being is only what it is—and judgment, a wholly psychic positivity, refers to being since judgment formulates a negation which concerns being and which consequently is transcendent. Negation, the result of concrete psychic operations, is supported in existence by these very operations and is incapable of existing by itself; it has the existence of a noema-correlate; its *esse* resides exactly in its *percipi*. Nothingness, the conceptual unity

of negative judgments, can not have the slightest trace of reality, save that which the Stoics confer on their "lecton."¹ Can we accept this concept?

The question can be put in these terms: Is negation as the structure of the judicative proposition at the origin of nothingness? Or on the contrary is nothingness as the structure of the real, the origin and foundation of negation? Thus the problem of being had referred us first to that of the question as a human attitude, and the problem of the question now refers us to that of the being of negation.

It is evident that non-being always appears within the limits of a human expectation. It is because I expect to find fifteen hundred francs that I find only thirteen hundred. It is because a physicist expects a certain verification of his hypothesis that nature can tell him no. It would be in vain to deny that negation appears on the original basis of a relation of man to the world. The world does not disclose its non-beings to one who has not first posited them as possibilities. But is this to say that these non-beings are to be reduced to pure subjectivity? Does this mean to say that we ought to give them the importance and the type of existence of the Stoic "lecton," of Husserl's *noema*? We think not.

First it is not true that negation is only a quality of judgment. The question is formulated by an interrogative judgment, but it is not itself a judgment; it is a pre-judicative attitude. I can question by a look, by a gesture. In posing a question I stand facing being in a certain way and this relation to being is a relation of being; the judgment is only one optional expression of it. At the same time it is not necessarily a person whom the questioner questions about being; this conception of the question by making of it an intersubjective phenomenon, detaches it from the being to which it adheres and leaves it in the air as pure modality of dialogue. On the contrary, we must consider the question in dialogue to be only a particular species of the genus "question;" the being in question is not necessarily a thinking being. If my car breaks down, it is the carburetor, the spark plugs, etc., that I question. If my watch stops, I can question the watchmaker about the cause of the stopping, but it is the various mechanisms of the watch that the watchmaker will in turn question. What I expect from the carburetor, what the watchmaker expects from the works of the watch, is not a judgment; it is a disclosure of being on the basis of which we can make a judgment. And if I expect a disclosure of being, I am prepared at the same time for the eventuality of a disclosure of a non-being. If I question the carburetor, it is because I consider it possible that "there is nothing there" in the carburetor. Thus my question by its nature envelops a certain pre-judicative comprehension of non-being; it is in itself a relation of being with non-

¹ An abstraction or something with purely nominal existence—like space or time. Tr.

being, on the basis of the original transcendence; that is, in a relation of being with being.

Moreover if the proper nature of the question is obscured by the fact that questions are frequently put by one man to other men, it should be pointed out here that there are numerous non-judicative conducts which present this immediate comprehension of non-being on the basis of being—in its original purity. If, for example, we consider *destruction*, we must recognize that it is an activity which doubtless could utilize judgment as an instrument but which can not be defined as uniquely or even primarily judicative. "Destruction" presents the same structure as "the question." In a sense, certainly, man is the only being by whom a destruction can be accomplished. A geological plication, a storm do not destroy—or at least they do not destroy directly; they merely modify the distribution of masses of beings. There is no less after the storm than before. There is *something else*. Even this expression is improper, for to posit otherness there must be a witness who can retain the past in some manner and compare it to the present in the form of *no longer*. In the absence of this witness, there is being before as after the storm—that is all. If a cyclone can bring about the death of certain living beings, this death will be destruction only if it is experienced as such. In order for destruction to exist, there must be first a relation of man to being—i.e., a transcendence; and within the limits of this relation, it is necessary that man apprehend one being as destructible. This supposes a limiting cutting into being by a being, which, as we saw in connection with truth, is already a process of nihilation. The being under consideration is *that* and outside of that *nothing*. The gunner who has been assigned an objective carefully points his gun in a certain direction *excluding* all others. But even this would still be nothing unless the being of the gunner's objective is revealed as *fragile*. And what is fragility if not a certain probability of non-being for a given being under determined circumstances. A being is fragile if it carries in its being a definite possibility of non-being. But once again it is through man that fragility comes into being, for the individualizing limitation which we mentioned earlier is the condition of fragility; one being is fragile and not *all* being, for the latter is beyond all possible destruction. Thus the relation of individualizing limitation which man enters into with one being on the original basis of his relation to being causes fragility to enter into this being as the appearance of a permanent possibility of non-being. But this is not all. In order for destructibility to exist, man must determine himself in the face of this possibility of non-being, either positively or negatively; he must either take the necessary measures to realize it (destruction proper) or, by a negation of non-being, to maintain it always on the level of a simple possibility (by preventive measures). Thus it is man who renders cities destructible, precisely because he posits them as fragile and as precious and

because he adopts a system of protective measures with regard to them. It is because of this ensemble of measures that an earthquake or a volcanic eruption can destroy these cities or these human constructions. The original meaning and aim of war are contained in the smallest building of man. It is necessary then to recognize that destruction is an essentially human thing and that it is man who destroys his cities through the agency of earthquakes or directly, who destroys his ships through the agency of cyclones or directly. But at the same time it is necessary to acknowledge that destruction supposes a pre-judicative comprehension of nothingness as such and a conduct in the face of *nothingness*. In addition destruction although coming into being through man, is an *objective fact* and not a thought. Fragility has been impressed upon the very being of this vase, and its destruction would be an irreversible absolute event which I could only verify. There is a transphenomenality of non-being as of being. The examination of "destruction" leads us then to the same results as the examination of "the question."

But if we wish to decide with certainty, we need only to consider an example of a negative judgment and to ask ourselves whether it causes non-being to appear at the heart of being or merely limits itself to determining a prior revelation. I have an appointment with Pierre at four o'clock. I arrive at the café a quarter of an hour late. Pierre is always punctual. Will he have waited for me? I look at the room, the patrons, and I say, "He is not here." Is there an intuition of Pierre's absence, or does negation indeed enter in only with judgment? At first sight it seems absurd to speak here of intuition since to be exact there could not be an intuition of *nothing* and since the absence of Pierre is this nothing. Popular consciousness, however, bears witness to this intuition. Do we not say, for example, "I suddenly saw that he was not there." Is this just a matter of misplacing the negation? Let us look a little closer.

It is certain that the café by itself with its patrons, its tables, its booths, its mirrors, its light, its smoky atmosphere, and the sounds of voices, rattling saucers, and footsteps which fill it—the café is a fullness of being. And all the intuitions of detail which I can have are filled by these odors, these sounds, these colors, all phenomena which have a transphenomenal being. Similarly Pierre's actual presence in a place which I do not know is also a plenitude of being. We seem to have found fullness everywhere. But we must observe that in perception there is always the construction of a figure on a ground. No one object, no group of objects is especially designed to be organized as specifically either ground or figure; all depends on the direction of my attention. When I enter this café to search for Pierre, there is formed a synthetic organization of all the objects in the café, on the ground of which Pierre is given as about to appear. This organization of the café as the ground is an original nihilation. Each element of the setting, a person, a table, a chair, attempts to isolate itself, to lift itself

upon the ground constituted by the totality of the other objects, only to fall back once more into the undifferentiation of this ground; it melts into the ground. For the ground is that which is seen only in addition, that which is the object of a purely marginal attention. Thus the original nihilation of all the figures which appear and are swallowed up in the total neutrality of a ground is the necessary condition for the appearance of the principle figure, which is here the person of Pierre. This nihilation is given to my intuition; I am witness to the successive disappearance of all the objects which I look at—in particular of the faces, which detain me for an instant (Could this be Pierre?) and which as quickly decompose precisely because they “are not” the face of Pierre. Nevertheless if I should finally discover Pierre, my intuition would be filled by a solid element, I should be suddenly arrested by his face and the whole café would organize itself around him as a discrete presence.

But now Pierre is not here. This does not mean that I discover his absence in some precise spot in the establishment. In fact Pierre is absent from the whole café; his absence fixes the café in its evanescence; the café remains ground; it persists in offering itself as an undifferentiated totality to my only marginal attention; it slips into the background; it pursues its nihilation. Only it makes itself ground for a determined figure; it carries the figure everywhere in front of it, presents the figure everywhere to me. This figure which slips constantly between my look and the solid, real objects of the café is precisely a perpetual disappearance; it is Pierre raising himself as nothingness on the ground of the nihilation of the café. So that what is offered to intuition is a flickering of nothingness; it is the nothingness of the ground, the nihilation of which summons and demands the appearance of the figure, and it is the figure—the nothingness which slips as a *nothing* to the surface of the ground. It serves as foundation for the judgment—“Pierre is not here.” It is in fact the intuitive apprehension of a double nihilation. To be sure, Pierre’s absence supposes an original relation between me and this café: there is an infinity of people who are without any relation with this café for want of a real expectation which establishes their absence. But, to be exact, I myself expected to see Pierre, and my expectation has caused the absence of Pierre to happen as a real event concerning this café. It is an objective fact at present that I have discovered this absence, and it presents itself as a synthetic relation between Pierre and the setting in which I am looking for him. Pierre absent haunts this café and is the condition of its self-nihilating organization as ground. By contrast, judgments which I can make subsequently to amuse myself, such as, “Wellington is not in this café, Paul Valéry is no longer here, etc.”—these have a purely abstract meaning; they are pure applications of the principle of negation without real or efficacious foundation, and they never succeed in establishing a real relation between the café and Wellington or Valéry. Here the rela-

tion "is not" is merely thought. This example is sufficient to show that non-being does not come to things by a negative judgment; it is the negative judgment, on the contrary, which is conditioned and supported by non-being.

How could it be otherwise? How could we even conceive of the negative form of judgment if all is plenitude of being and positivity? We believed for a moment that the negation could arise from the comparison instituted between the result anticipated and the result obtained. But let us look at that comparison. Here is an original judgment, a concrete, positive psychic act which establishes a fact: "There are 1300 francs in my wallet." Then there is another which is something else, no longer it but an establishing of fact and an affirmation: "I expected to find 1500 francs." There we have real and objective facts, psychic, and positive events, affirmative judgments. Where are we to place negation? Are we to believe that it is a pure and simple application of a category? And do we wish to hold that the mind in itself possesses the not as a form of sorting out and separation? But in this case we remove even the slightest suspicion of negativity from the negation. If we admit that the category of the "not" which exists *in fact* in the mind and is a positive and concrete process to brace and systematize our knowledge, if we admit first that it is suddenly released by the presence in us of certain affirmative judgments and then that it comes suddenly to mark with its seal certain thoughts which result from these judgments—by these considerations we will have carefully stripped negation of all negative function. For negation is a refusal of existence. By means of it a being (or a way of being) is posited, then thrown back to nothingness. If negation is a category, if it is only a sort of plug set indifferently on certain judgments, then how will we explain the fact that it can nihilate a being, cause it suddenly to arise, and then appoint it to be thrown back to non-being? If prior judgments establish fact, like those which we have taken for examples, negation must be like a free discovery, it must tear us away from this wall of positivity which encircles us. Negation is an abrupt break in continuity which can not in any case result from prior affirmations; it is an original and irreducible event. Here we are in the realm of consciousness. Consciousness moreover can not produce a negation except in the form of consciousness of negation. No category can "inhabit" consciousness and reside there in the manner of a thing. The not, as an abrupt intuitive discovery, appears as consciousness (of being), consciousness of the not. In a word, if being is everywhere, it is not only Nothingness which, as Bergson maintains, is inconceivable; for negation will never be derived from being. The necessary condition for our saying not is that non-being be a perpetual presence in us and outside of us, that nothingness haunt being.

But where does nothingness come from? If it is the original condition of the questioning attitude and more generally of all philosophical or

scientific inquiry, what is the original relation of the human being to nothingness? What is the original nihilating conduct?

III. THE DIALECTICAL CONCEPT OF NOTHINGNESS

It is still too soon for us to hope to disengage the meaning of this nothingness, against which the question has suddenly thrown us. But there are several conclusions which we can formulate even now. In particular it would be worthwhile to determine the relations between being and that non-being which haunts it. We have established a certain parallelism between the types of conduct man adopts in the face of being and those which he maintains in the face of Nothingness, and we are immediately tempted to consider being and non-being as two complementary components of the real—like dark and light. In short we would then be dealing with two strictly contemporary notions which would somehow be united in the production of existents and which it would be useless to consider in isolation. Pure being and pure non-being would be two abstractions which could be reunited only on the basis of concrete realities.

Such is certainly the point of view of Hegel. It is in the *Logic* in fact that he studies the relations of Being and Non-Being, and he calls the *Logic* "The system of the pure determinations of thought." He defines more fully by saying, "Thoughts as they are ordinarily represented, are not pure thoughts, for by a being which is thought, we understand a being of which the content is an empirical content. In logic thoughts are apprehended in such a way that they have no other content than the content of pure thought, which content is engendered by it."² To be sure, these determinations are "what is deepest in things but at the same time when one considers them "in and for themselves," one deduces them from thought itself and discovers in them their truth. However the effort of Hegelian logic is to "make clear the inadequacy of the notions (which it) considers one by one and the necessity, in order to understand them, of raising each to a more complete notion which surpasses them while integrating them."³

One can apply to Hegel what Le Senne said of the philosophy of Hamelin: "Each of the lower terms depends on the higher term, as the abstract on the concrete which is necessary for it to realize itself." The true concrete for Hegel is the Existent with its essence; it is the Totality produced by the synthetic integration of all the abstract moments which are surpassed in it by requiring their complement. In this sense Being will be the most abstract of abstractions and the poorest, if we consider it in itself—that is, by separating it from its surpassing toward Essence.

² Introduction v. P. c. 2cd. E§xiv quoted by Lefebvre: *Morceaux choisis*.

³ Laporte: *Le Problème de l'Abstraction*, p. 25 (Presses Universitaires, 1940).

In fact "Being is related to Essence as the immediate to the mediate. Things in general 'are,' but their being consists in manifesting their essence. Being passes into Essence. One can express this by saying, 'Being presupposes Essence.' Although Essence appears in relation to Being as mediated, Essence is nevertheless the true origin. Being returns to its ground; Being is surpassed in Essence."⁴

Thus Being cut from Essence which is its ground becomes "mere empty immediacy." This is how the *Phenomenology of Mind* defines it by presenting pure Being "from the point of view of truth" as the immediate. If the beginning of logic is to be the immediate, we shall then find beginning in *Being*, which is "the indetermination which precedes all determination, the undetermined as the absolute point of departure."

But Being thus undetermined immediately "passes into" its opposite. "This pure Being," writes Hegel in *Logic* (of the *Encyclopaedia*) is "pure abstraction and consequently absolute negation, which taken in its immediate moment is also non-being." Is Nothingness not in fact simple identity with itself, complete emptiness, absence of determinations and of content? Pure being and pure nothingness are then the same thing. Or rather it is true to say that they are different; but "as here the difference is not yet a determined difference—for being and non-being constitute the immediate moment such as it is in them—this difference can not be named; it is only a pure opinion."⁵ This means concretely that "there is nothing in heaven or on earth which does not contain in itself being and nothingness."⁶

It is still too soon for us to discuss the Hegelian concept itself; we need all the results of our study in order to take a position regarding this. It is appropriate here to observe only that being is reduced by Hegel to a signification of the existent. Being is enveloped by essence, which is its foundation and origin. Hegel's whole theory is based on the idea that a philosophical procedure is necessary in order at the outset of logic to rediscover the immediate in terms of the mediated, the abstract in terms of the concrete on which it is grounded. But we have already remarked that being does not hold the same relation to the phenomenon as the abstract holds to the concrete. Being is not one "structure among others," one moment of the object; it is the very condition of all structures and of all moments. It is the ground on which the characteristics of the phenomenon will manifest themselves. Similarly it is not admissible that the being of things "consists in manifesting their essence." For then a being of that being would be necessary. Furthermore if the being of things "consisted" in

⁴ *Treatise on Logic*, written by Hegel between 1808 and 1811, to serve as the basis for his course at the gymnasium at Nuremberg.

⁵ Hegel: P.c.—E.988

⁶ Hegel: *Greater Logic*, chap. 1.

manifesting their essence, it would be hard to see how Hegel could determine a pure moment of Being where we could not find at least a trace of that original structure. It is true that the understanding determines pure being, isolates and fixes it in its very determinations. But if surpassing toward essence constitutes the original character of being, and if the understanding is limited to "determining and persevering in the determinations," we can not see precisely how it does not determine being as "consisting in manifesting."

It might be said in defense of Hegel that every determination is negation. But the understanding in this sense is limited to denying that its object is other than it is. That is sufficient doubtless to prevent all dialectical process, but not enough to effect its disappearance at the threshold of its surpassing. In so far as being surpasses itself toward something else, it is not subject to the determinations of the understanding. But in so far as it surpasses *itself*—that is, in so far as it is in its very depths the origin of its own surpassing—being must on the contrary appear such as it is to the understanding which fixes it in its own determinations. To affirm that being is only what it is would be at least to leave being intact so far as it is its own surpassing. We see here the ambiguity of the Hegelian notion of "surpassing" which sometimes appears to be an upsurge from the inmost depth of the being considered and at other times an external movement by which this being is involved. It is not enough to affirm that the understanding finds in being only what it is; we must also explain how being, which is what it is, can be *only that*. Such an explanation would derive its legitimacy from the consideration of the phenomenon of being as such and not from the negating processes of the understanding.

But what needs examination here is especially Hegel's statement that being and nothingness constitute two opposites, the difference between which on the level of abstraction under consideration is only a simple "opinion."

To oppose being to nothingness as thesis and antithesis, as Hegel does, is to suppose that they are logically contemporary. Thus simultaneously two opposites arise as the two limiting terms of a logical series. Here we must note carefully that opposites alone can enjoy this simultaneity because they are equally positive (or equally negative). But non-being is not the opposite of being; it is its contradiction. This implies that logically nothingness is subsequent to being since it is being, first posited, then denied. It can not be therefore that being and non-being are concepts with the same content since on the contrary non-being supposes a irreducible mental act. Whatever may be the original undifferentiation of being, non-being is that same undifferentiation denied. This permits Hegel to make being pass into nothingness; this is what by implication has introduced negation into his very definition of being. This is self evident since any definition is negative, since Hegel has told us, making use of a state-

ment of Spinoza's, that *omnis determinatio est negatio*. And does he not write, "It does not matter what the determination or content is which would distinguish being from something else; whatever would give it a content would prevent it from maintaining itself in its purity. It is pure indetermination and emptiness. *Nothing* can be apprehended in it."

Thus anyone who introduces negation into being from outside will discover subsequently that he makes it pass into non-being. But here we have a play on words involving the very idea of negation. For if I refuse to allow being any determination or content, I am nevertheless forced to affirm at least that it is. Thus, let anyone deny being whatever he wishes, he can not cause it *not to be*, thanks to the very fact that he denies that it is this or that. Negation can not touch the nucleus of being of Being, which is absolute plenitude and entire positivity. By contrast Non-being is a negation which aims at this nucleus of absolute density. Non-being is denied at the heart of Being. When Hegel writes, "(Being and nothingness) are empty abstractions, and the one is as empty as the other,"⁷ he forgets that emptiness is emptiness of something.⁸ Being is empty of all other determination than identity with itself, but non-being is empty of being. In a word, we must recall here against Hegel that being is and that nothingness is not.

Thus even though being can not be the support of any differentiated quality, nothingness is logically subsequent to it since it supposes being in order to deny it, since the irreducible quality of the *not* comes to add itself to that undifferentiated mass of being in order to release it. That does not mean only that we should refuse to put being and non-being on the same plane, but also that we must be careful never to posit nothingness as an original abyss from which being arose. The use which we make of the notion of nothingness in its familiar form always supposes a preliminary specification of being. It is striking in this connection that language furnishes us with a nothingness of *things* and a nothingness of human beings.⁹ But the specification is still more obvious in the majority of instances. We say, pointing to a particular collection of objects, "Touch *nothing*," which means, very precisely, nothing of that collection. Similarly, if we question someone on well determined events in his private or public life, he may reply, "I know *nothing*." And this nothing includes the totality of the facts on which we questioned him. Even Socrates with his famous statement, "I know that I know nothing," designates by this *nothing* the totality of being considered as Truth.

⁷ P. c. 2 ed. E. §Lxxxvii.

⁸ It is so much the more strange in that Hegel is the first to have noted that "every negation is a determined negation"; that is, it depends on a content.

⁹ Ne . . . rien = "nothing" as opposed to ne . . . personne = "nobody," which are equally fundamental negative expressions. Sartre here conveniently has based his ontology on the exigencies of a purely French syntax. Tr.

If adopting for the moment the point of view of naive cosmogonies, we tried to ask ourselves what "was there" before a world existed, and if we replied "nothing," we would be forced to recognize that this "before" like this "nothing" is in effect retroactive. What we deny today, we who are established in being, is what there was of being before this being. Negation here springs from a consciousness which is turned back toward the beginning. If we remove from this original emptiness its characteristic of being empty of *this world* and of every whole taking the form of a world, as well as its characteristic of *before*, which presupposes an *after*, then the very negation disappears, giving way to a total indetermination which it would be impossible to conceive, even and especially as a nothingness. Thus reversing the statement of Spinoza, we could say that every negation is determination. This means that being is prior to nothingness and establishes the ground for it. By this we must understand not only that being has a logical precedence over nothingness but also that it is from being that nothingness derives concretely its efficacy. This is what we mean when we say that *nothingness haunts being*. That means that being has no need of nothingness in order to be conceived and that we can examine the idea of it exhaustively without finding there the least trace of nothingness. But on the other hand, nothingness, *which is not*, can have only a borrowed existence, and it gets its being from being. Its nothingness of being is encountered only within the limits of being, and the total disappearance of being would not be the advent of the reign of non-being, but on the contrary the concomitant disappearance of nothingness. *Non-being exists only on the surface of being.*

IV. THE PHENOMENOLOGICAL CONCEPT OF NOTHINGNESS

THERE is another possible way of conceiving being and nothingness as complements. One could view them as two equally necessary components of the real without making being "pass into" nothingness—as Hegel does—and without insisting on the posteriority of nothingness as we attempted to do. We might on the contrary emphasize the reciprocal forces of repulsion which being and non-being exercise on each other, the real in some way being the tension resulting from these antagonistic forces. It is toward this new conception that Heidegger is oriented.¹⁰

We need not look far to see the progress which Heidegger's theory of nothingness has made over that of Hegel. First, being and non-being are no longer empty abstractions. Heidegger in his most important work

¹⁰ Heidegger: *Qu'est-ce que la métaphysique* (Tr. by Corbin, N.R.F. 1938). In English "What is Metaphysics?" Tr. by R.F.C. Hull and Alan Crick. From *Existence and Being*, ed. by Werner Brock, Henry Regnery. 1949.

has shown the legitimacy of raising the question concerning being; the latter has no longer the character of a Scholastic universal, which it still retained with Hegel. There is a meaning of being which must be clarified; there is a "pre-ontological comprehension" of being which is involved in every kind of conduct belonging to "human reality"—i.e., in each of its projects. Similarly difficulties which customarily arise as soon as a philosopher touches on the problem of Nothingness are shown to be without foundation; they are important in so far as they limit the function of the understanding, and they show simply that this problem is not within the province of the understanding. There exist on the other hand numerous attitudes of "human reality" which imply a "comprehension" of nothingness: hate, prohibitions, regret, etc. For "Dasein" there is even a permanent possibility of finding oneself "face to face" with nothingness and discovering it as a phenomenon: this possibility is anguish.

Heidegger, while establishing the possibilities of a concrete apprehension of Nothingness, never falls into the error which Hegel made; he does not preserve a being for Non-Being, not even an abstract being. Nothing is not; it nihilates itself.¹¹ It is supported and conditioned by transcendence. We know that for Heidegger the being of human reality is defined as "being-in-the-world." The world is a synthetic complex of instrumental realities inasmuch as they point one to another in ever widening circles, and inasmuch as man makes himself known in terms of this complex which he is. This means both that "human reality" springs forth invested with being and "finds itself" (*sich befinden*) in being—and also that human reality causes being, which surrounds it, to be disposed around human reality in the form of the world.

But human reality can make being appear as organized totality in the world only by surpassing being. All determination for Heidegger is surpassing since it supposes a withdrawal taken from a particular point of view. This passing beyond the world, which is a condition of the very rising up of the world as such, is effected by the *Dasein* which directs the surpassing toward itself. The characteristic of selfness (*Selbstheit*), in fact, is that man is always separated from what he is by all the breadth of the being which he is not. He makes himself known to himself from the other side of the world and he looks from the horizon toward himself to recover his inner being. Man is "a being of distances." In the movement of turning inward which traverses all of being, being arises and organizes itself as the world without there being either priority of the movement over the world, or the world over the movement. But this appearance of

¹¹ Heidegger uses the by now famous expression "*Das Nichts nichtet*" or "Nothing nothings." I think "nihilate" is a closer equivalent to Sartre's *néantise* than "annihilate" because the fundamental meaning of the term is "to make nothing" rather than "to destroy or do away with." *Nichtet*, *néantise*, and *nihilate* are all, of course, equally without foundation in the dictionaries of the respective languages. Tr.

the self beyond the world—that is, beyond the totality of the real—is an emergence of “human reality” in nothingness. It is in nothingness alone that being can be surpassed. At the same time it is from the point of view of beyond the world that being is organized into the world, which means on the one hand that human reality rises up as an emergence of being in non-being and on the other hand that the world is “suspended” in nothingness. Anguish is the discovery of this double, perpetual nihilation. It is in terms of this surpassing of the world that *Dasein* manages to realize the contingency of the world; that is, to raise the question, “How does it happen that there is something rather than nothing?” Thus the contingency of the world appears to human reality in so far as human reality has established itself in nothingness in order to apprehend the contingency.

Here then is nothingness surrounding being on every side and at the same time expelled from being. Here nothingness is given as that by which the world receives its outlines as the world. Can this solution satisfy us?

Certainly it can not be denied that the apprehension of the world *qua* world, is a nihilation. From the moment the world appears *qua* world it gives itself as being *only that*. The necessary counterpart of this apprehension then is indeed the emergence of “human reality” in nothingness. But where does “human reality” get its power of emerging thus in non-being? Without a doubt Heidegger is right in insisting on the fact that negation derives its foundation from nothingness. But if nothingness provides a ground for negation, it is because nothingness envelops the *not* within itself as its essential structure. In other words, it is not as undifferentiated emptiness or as a disguised otherness¹² that nothingness provides the ground for negation. Nothingness stands at the origin of the negative judgment because it is itself negation. It founds the negation as an act because it is the negation as *being*. Nothingness can be nothingness only by nihilating itself expressly as nothingness of the world; that is, in its nihilation it must direct itself expressly toward this world in order to constitute itself as refusal of the world. Nothingness carries being in its heart. But how does the emergence account for this nihilating refusal? Transcendence, which is “the project of self beyond,” is far from being able to establish nothingness; on the contrary, it is nothingness which is at the very heart of transcendence and which conditions it.

Now the characteristic of Heidegger’s philosophy is to describe *Dasein* by using positive terms which hide the implicit negations. *Dasein* is “outside of itself, in the world”; it is “a being of distances”; it is care; it is “its own possibilities,” etc. All this amounts to saying that *Dasein* “is not” in itself, that it “is not” in immediate proximity to itself, and that it “surpasses” the world inasmuch as it posits itself as *not being in itself* and as *not being the world*. In this sense Hegel is right rather than Heidegger.

¹² What Hegel would call “immediate otherness.”

ger when he states that Mind is the negative. Actually we can put to each of them the same question, phrased slightly differently. We should say to Hegel: "It is not sufficient to posit mind as mediation and the negative; it is necessary to demonstrate negativity as the structure of being of mind. What must mind be in order to be able to constitute itself as negative?" And we can ask the same question of Heidegger in these words: "If negation is the original structure of transcendence, what must be the original structure of 'human reality' in order for it to be able to transcend the world?" In both cases we are shown a negating activity and there is no concern to ground this activity upon a negative being. Heidegger in addition makes of Nothingness a sort of intentional correlate of transcendence, without seeing that he has already inserted it into transcendence itself as its original structure.

Furthermore what is the use of affirming that Nothingness provides the ground for negation, if it is merely to enable us to form subsequently a theory of non-being which by definition separates Nothingness from all concrete negation? If I emerge in nothingness beyond the world, how can this extra-mundane nothingness furnish a foundation for those little pools of non-being which we encounter each instant in the depth of being. I say, "Pierre is not there," "I have no more money," etc. Is it really necessary to surpass the world toward nothingness and to return subsequently to being in order to provide a ground for these everyday judgments? And how can the operation be affected? To accomplish it we are not required to make the world slip into nothingness; standing within the limits of being, we simply deny an attribute to a subject. Will someone say that each attribute refused, each being denied is taken up by one and the same extra-mundane nothingness, that non-being is like the fullness of what is not, that the world is suspended in non-being as the real is suspended in the heart of possibilities? In this case each negation would necessarily have for origin a particular surpassing: the surpassing of one being toward another. But what is this surpassing, if not simply the Hegelian mediation—and have we not already and in vain sought in Hegel the nihilating ground of the mediation? Furthermore even if the explanation is valid for the simple, radical negations which deny to a determined object any kind of presence in the depth of being (e.g. Centaurs do not exist—"There is no reason for him to be late"—"The ancient Greeks did not practice polygamy"), negations which, if need be, can contribute to constituting Nothingness as a sort of geometrical place for unfulfilled projects, all inexact representations, all vanished beings or those of which the idea is only a fiction—even so this interpretation of non-being would no longer be valid for a certain kind of reality which is in truth the most frequent: namely, those negations which include non-being in their being. How can we hold that these are at once partly within the universe and partly outside in extra-mundane nothingness?

Take for example the notion of distance, which conditions the determination of a location, the localization of a point. It is easy to see that it possesses a negative moment. Two points are distant when they are separated by a certain length. The length, a positive attribute of a segment of a straight line, intervenes here by virtue of the negation of an absolute, undifferentiated proximity. Someone might perhaps seek to reduce distance to being only the length of the segment of which the two points considered, A and B, would be the limits. But does he not see that he has changed the direction of attention in this case and that he has, under cover of the same word, given another object to intuition? The organized complex which is constituted by the segment with its two limiting terms can furnish actually two different objects to knowledge. We can in fact give the segment as immediate object of intuition, in which case this segment represents a full, concrete tension, of which the length is a positive attribute and the two points A and B appear only as a moment of the whole; that is, as they are implicated by the segment itself as its limits. Then the negation, expelled from the segment and its length, takes refuge in the two limits: to say that point B is a limit of the segment is to say that the segment does *not* extend beyond this point. Negation is here a secondary structure of the object. If, on the other hand, we direct our attention to the two points A and B, they arise as immediate objects of intuition on the ground of space. The segment disappears as a full, concrete object; it is apprehended in terms of two points as the emptiness, the negativity which separates them. Negation is not subject to the points, which cease to be limits in order to impregnate the very length of the segment with distance. Thus the total form constituted by the segment and its two limits with its inner structure of negation is capable of letting itself be apprehended in two ways. Rather there are two forms, and the condition of the appearance of the one is the disintegration of the other, exactly as in perception we constitute a particular object as a figure by rejecting another so as to make of it a ground, and conversely. In both instances we find the same quantity of negation which at one time passes into the notion of limits and at another into the notion of distance, but which in each case can not be suppressed. Will someone object that the idea of distance is psychological and that it designates only the extension which must be cleared in order to go from point A to point B? We shall reply that the same negation is included in this to clear since this notion expresses precisely the passive resistance of the remoteness. We will willingly admit with Heidegger that "human reality" is "remote-from-itself;" that is, that it rises in the world as that which creates distances and at the same time causes them to be removed (*entfernend*). But this remoteness-from-self, even if it is the necessary condition in order that there may be remoteness in general, envelops remoteness in itself as the negative structure which must be surmounted. It will be

useless to attempt to reduce distance to the simple result of a *measurement*. What has become evident in the course of the preceding discussion is that the two points and the segment which is inclosed between them have the indissoluble unity of what the Germans call a *Gestalt*. Negation is the cement which realizes this unity. It defines precisely the immediate relation which connects these two points and which presents them to intuition as the indissoluble unity of the distance. This negation can be covered over only by claiming to reduce distance to the measurement of a length, for negation is the *raison d'être* of that measurement.

What we have just shown by the examination of *distance*, we could just as well have brought out by describing realities like absence, change, otherness, repulsion, regret, distraction, etc. There is an infinite number of realities which are not only objects of judgment, but which are experienced, opposed, feared, etc., by the human being and which in their inner structure are inhabited by negation, as by a necessary condition of their existence. We shall call them *négalités*.¹³ Kant caught a glimpse of their significance when he spoke of regulative concepts (e.g. the immortality of the soul), types of syntheses of negative and positive in which negation is the condition of positivity. The function of negation varies according to the nature of the object considered. Between wholly positive realities (which however retain negation as the condition of the sharpness of their outlines, as that which fixes them as what they are) and those in which the positivity is only an appearance concealing a hole of nothingness, all gradations are possible. In any case it is impossible to throw these negations back into an extra-mundane nothingness since they are dispersed in being, are supported by being, and are conditions of reality. Nothingness beyond the world accounts for absolute negation; but we have just discovered a swarm of ultra-mundane beings which possess as much reality and efficacy as other beings, but which inclose within themselves non-being. They require an explanation which remains within the limits of the real. Nothingness if it is supported by being, vanishes *qua nothingness*, and we fall back upon being. Nothingness can be nihilated only on the foundation of being; if nothingness can be given, it is neither before nor after being, nor in a general way outside of being. Nothingness lies coiled in the heart of being—like a worm.

V. THE ORIGIN OF NOTHINGNESS

It would be well at this point to cast a glance backward and to measure the road already covered. We raised first the question of being. Then examining this very question conceived as a type of human conduct, we questioned this in turn. We next had to recognize that no question could

¹³ A word coined by Sartre with no equivalent term in English. Tr.

be asked, in particular not that of being, if negation did not exist. But this negation itself when inspected more closely referred us back to Nothingness as its origin and foundation. In order for negation to exist in the world and in order that we may consequently raise questions concerning Being, it is necessary that in some way Nothingness be given. We perceived then that Nothingness can be conceived neither outside of being, nor as a complementary, abstract notion, nor as an infinite milieu where being is suspended. Nothingness must be given at the heart of Being, in order for us to be able to apprehend that particular type of realities which we have called *néгатités*. But this intra-mundane Nothingness cannot be produced by Being-in-itself; the notion of Being as full positivity does not contain Nothingness as one of its structures. We can not even say that Being excludes it. Being lacks all relation with it. Hence the question which is put to us now with a particular urgency: if Nothingness can be conceived neither outside of Being, nor in terms of Being, and if on the other hand, since it is non-being, it can not derive from itself the necessary force to "nihilate itself," where does Nothingness come from?

If we wish to pursue the problem further, we must first recognize that we can not grant to nothingness the property of "nihilating itself." For although the expression "to nihilate itself" is thought of as removing from nothingness the last semblance of being, we must recognize that only *Being* can nihilate itself; however it comes about, in order to nihilate itself, it must be. But Nothingness is not. If we can speak of it, it is only because it possesses an appearance of being, a borrowed being, as we have noted above. Nothingness is not, Nothingness "is made-to-be,"¹⁴ Nothingness does not nihilate itself; Nothingness "is nihilated." It follows therefore that there must exist a Being (this can not be the In-itself) of which the property is to nihilate Nothingness, to support it in its being, to sustain it perpetually in its very existence, a *being by which nothingness comes to things*. But how can this Being be related to Nothingness so that through it Nothingness comes to things? We must observe first that the being postulated can not be passive in relation to Nothingness, can not receive it; Nothingness could not come to this being except through another Being—which would be an infinite regress. But on the other hand, the Being by which Nothingness comes to the world can not produce Nothingness while remaining indifferent to that production—like the Stoic cause which produces its effect without being itself changed.

¹⁴ The French is *est été*, which literally means "is been," an expression as meaningless in ordinary French as in English. Maurice Natanson suggests "is-was." (*A Critique of Jean-Paul Sartre's Ontology*. University of Nebraska Studies. March 1951. p. 59.) I prefer "is made-to-be" because Sartre seems to be using *être* as a transitive verb, here in the passive voice, thus suggesting that nothingness has been subjected to an act involving being. Other passages containing this expression will, I believe, bear out this interpretation. Tr.

It would be inconceivable that a Being which is full positivity should maintain and create outside itself a Nothingness or transcendent being, for there would be nothing in Being by which Being could surpass itself toward Non-Being. The Being by which Nothingness arrives in the world must nihilate Nothingness in its Being, and even so it still runs the risk of establishing Nothingness as a transcendent in the very heart of immanence unless it nihilates Nothingness in its being in connection with its own being. The Being by which Nothingness arrives in the world is a being such that in its Being, the Nothingness of its Being is in question. *The being by which Nothingness comes to the world must be its own Nothingness.* By this we must understand not a nihilating act, which would require in turn a foundation in Being, but an ontological characteristic of the Being required. It remains to learn in what delicate, exquisite region of Being we shall encounter that Being which is its own Nothingness.

We shall be helped in our inquiry by a more complete examination of the conduct which served us as a point of departure. We must return to the question. We have seen, it may be recalled, that every question in essence posits the possibility of a negative reply. In a question we question a being about its being or its way of being. This way of being or this being is veiled; there always remains the possibility that it may unveil itself as a Nothingness. But from the very fact that we presume that an Existent can always be revealed as *nothing*, every question supposes that we realize a nihilating withdrawal in relation to the given, which becomes a simple presentation, fluctuating between being and Nothingness.

It is essential therefore that the questioner have the permanent possibility of dissociating himself from the causal series which constitutes being and which can produce only being. If we admitted that the question is determined in the questioner by universal determinism, the question would thereby become unintelligible and even inconceivable. A real cause, in fact, produces a real effect and the caused being is wholly engaged by the cause in positivity; to the extent that its being depends on the cause, it can not have within itself the tiniest germ of nothingness. Thus in so far as the questioner must be able to effect in relation to the questioned a kind of nihilating withdrawal, he is not subject to the causal order of the world; he detaches himself from Being. This means that by a double movement of nihilation, he nihilates the thing questioned in relation to himself by placing it in a *neutral* state, between being and non-being—and that he nihilates himself in relation to the thing questioned by wrenching himself from being in order to be able to bring out of himself the possibility of a non-being. Thus in posing a question, a certain negative element is introduced into the world. We see nothingness making the world iridescent, casting a shimmer over things. But at the same time the question emanates from a questioner who in order to motivate

himself in his being as one who questions, disengages himself from being. This disengagement is then by definition a human process. Man presents himself at least in this instance as a being who causes Nothingness to arise in the world, inasmuch as he himself is affected with non-being to this end.

These remarks may serve as guiding thread as we examine the *néгатités* of which we spoke earlier. There is no doubt at all that these are transcendent realities; distance, for example, is imposed on us as something which we have to take into account, which must be cleared with effort. However these realities are of a very peculiar nature; they all indicate immediately an essential relation of human reality to the world. They derive their origin from an act, an expectation, or a project of the human being; they all indicate an aspect of being as it appears to the human being who is engaged in the world. The relations of man in the world, which the *néгатités* indicate, have nothing in common with the relations *à posteriori* which are brought out by empirical activity. We are no longer dealing with those relations of *instrumentality* by which, according to Heidegger, objects in the world disclose themselves to "human reality." Every *néгатité* appears rather as one of the essential conditions of this relation of instrumentality. In order for the totality of being to order itself around us as instruments, in order for it to parcel itself into differentiated complexes which refer one to another and which can be used, it is necessary that negation rise up not as a thing among other things but as the rubric of a category which presides over the arrangement and the redistribution of great masses of being in things. Thus the rise of man in the midst of the being which "invests" him causes a world to be discovered. But the essential and primordial moment of this rise is the negation. Thus we have reached the first goal of this study. Man is the being through whom nothingness comes to the world. But this question immediately provokes another: What must man be in his being in order that through him nothingness may come to being?

Being can generate only being and if man is inclosed in this process of generation, only being will come out of him. If we are to assume that man is able to question this process—i.e., to make it the object of interrogation—he must be able to hold it up to view as a totality. He must be able to put himself outside of being and by the same stroke weaken the structure of the being of being. Yet it is not given to "human reality" to annihilate even provisionally the mass of being which it posits before itself. Man's relation with being is that he can modify it. For man to put a particular existent out of circuit is to put himself out of circuit in relation to that existent. In this case he is not subject to it; he is out of reach; it can not act on him, for he has retired *beyond a nothingness*. Descartes following the Stoics has given a name to this possibility which human reality has to secrete a nothingness which isolates it—it is free-

dom. But freedom here is only a name. If we wish to penetrate further into the question, we must not be content with this reply and we ought to ask now, What is human freedom if through it nothingness comes into the world?

It is not yet possible to deal with the problem of freedom in all its fullness.¹⁵ In fact the steps which we have completed up to now show clearly that freedom is not a faculty of the human soul to be envisaged and described in isolation. What we have been trying to define is the being of man in so far as he conditions the appearance of nothingness, and this being has appeared to us as freedom. Thus freedom as the requisite condition for the nihilation of nothingness is not a property which belongs among others to the essence of the human being. We have already noticed furthermore that with man the relation of existence to essence is not comparable to what it is for the things of the world. Human freedom precedes essence in man and makes it possible; the essence of the human being is suspended in his freedom. What we call freedom is impossible to distinguish from the *being* of "human reality." Man does not exist *first* in order to be free *subsequently*; there is no difference between the being of man and his *being-free*. This is not the time to make a frontal attack on a question which can be treated exhaustively only in the light of a rigorous elucidation of the human being. Here we are dealing with freedom in connection with the problem of nothingness and only to the extent that it conditions the appearance of nothingness.

What first appears evident is that human reality can detach itself from the world—in questioning, in systematic doubt, in sceptical doubt, in the *ἐποχή*, etc.—only if by nature it has the possibility of self-detachment. This was seen by Descartes, who is establishing doubt on freedom when he claims for us the possibility of suspending our judgments. Alain's position is similar. It is also in this sense that Hegel asserts the freedom of the mind to the degree that mind is mediation—i.e., the Negative. Furthermore it is one of the trends of contemporary philosophy to see in human consciousness a sort of escape from the self; such is the meaning of the transcendence of Heidegger. The intentionality of Husserl and of Brentano has also to a large extent the characteristic of a detachment from self. But we are not yet in a position to consider freedom as an inner structure of consciousness. We lack for the moment both instruments and technique to permit us to succeed in that enterprise. What interests us at present is a temporal operation since questioning is, like doubt, a kind of behavior; it assumes that the human being reposes first in the depths of being and then detaches himself from it by a nihilating withdrawal. Thus we are envisaging the condition of the nihilation as a relation to the self in the heart of a temporal process. We wish simply to show that by identifying consciousness with a causal sequence indefi-

¹⁵ Cf. Part IV, chap. I.

nately continued, one transmutes it into a plenitude of being and thereby causes it to return into the unlimited totality of being—as is well illustrated by the futility of the efforts to dissociate psychological determinism from universal determinism and to constitute it as a separate series.

The room of someone absent, the books of which he turned the pages, the objects which he touched are in themselves only books, objects; i.e., full actualities. The very traces which he has left can be deciphered as traces of him only within a situation where he has been already posited as absent. The dog-eared book with the well-read pages is not by itself a book of which Pierre has turned the pages, of which he no longer turns the pages. If we consider it as the present, transcendent motivation of my perception or even as the synthetic flux, regulated by my sensible impressions, then it is merely a volume with turned down, worn pages; it can refer only to itself or to present objects, to the lamp which illuminates it, to the table which holds it. It would be useless to invoke an association by contiguity as Plato does in the *Phaedo*, where he makes the image of the absent one appear on the margin of the perception of the lyre or of the cithara which he has touched. This image, if we consider it in itself and in the spirit of classical theories, is a definite plenitude; it is a concrete and positive psychic fact. Consequently we must of necessity pass on it a doubly negative judgment: subjectively, to signify that the image is not a perception; objectively, to deny that the Pierre of whom I form the image is here at this moment.

This is the famous problem of the characteristics of the true image, which has concerned so many psychologists from Taine to Spaier. Association, we see, does not solve the problem; it pushes it back to the level of reflection. But in every way it demands a negation; that is, at the very least, a nihilating withdrawal of consciousness in relation to the image apprehended as subjective phenomenon, in order to posit it precisely as being only a subjective phenomenon.

Now I have attempted to show elsewhere¹⁶ that if we posit the image first as a nascent perception, it is radically impossible to distinguish it subsequently from actual perceptions. The image must enclose in its very structure a nihilating thesis. It constitutes itself qua image while positing its object as existing elsewhere or not existing. It carries within it a double negation; first it is the nihilation of the world (since the world is not offering the imagined object as an actual object of perception), secondly the nihilation of the object of the image (it is posited as not actual), and finally by the same stroke it is the nihilation of itself (since it is not a concrete, full psychic process.) In explaining how I apprehend the absence of Pierre in the room, it would be useless to invoke those famous "empty intentions" of Husserl, which are in great part constitutive of perception. Among the various perceptive intentions, indeed,

¹⁶ *L'imagination*. Alcan, 1936.

there are relations of *motivation* (but motivation is not causation), and among these intentions, some are full (*i.e.*, filled with what they aim at) and others empty. But precisely because the matter which should fill the empty intentions *does not exist*, it can not be this which motivates them in their structure. And since the other intentions are full, neither can they motivate the empty intentions inasmuch as the latter are empty. Moreover these intentions are of psychic nature and it would be an error to envisage them in the mode of things; that is, as recipients which would first be given, which according to circumstances could be emptied or filled, and which would be by nature indifferent to their state of being empty or filled. It seems that Husserl has not always escaped the materialist illusion. To be empty an intention must be conscious of itself as empty and precisely as empty of the exact matter at which it aims. An empty intention constitutes itself as empty to the exact extent that it posits its matter as non-existing or absent. In short an empty intention is a consciousness of negation which transcends itself toward an object which it posits as absent or non-existent.

Thus whatever may be the explanation which we give of it, Pierre's absence, in order to be established or realized, requires a negative moment by which consciousness in the absence of all prior determination, constitutes itself as negation. If in terms of my perceptions of the room, I conceive of the former inhabitant who is no longer in the room, I am of necessity forced to produce an act of thought which no prior state can determine nor motivate, in short to effect in myself a break with being. And in so far as I continually use *néгатités* to isolate and determine existents—*i.e.*, to think them—the succession of my "states of consciousness" is a perpetual separation of effect from cause, since every nihilating process must derive its source only from itself. Inasmuch as my present state would be a prolongation of my prior state, every opening by which negation could slip through would be completely blocked. Every psychic process of nihilation implies then a cleavage between the immediate psychic past and the present. This cleavage is precisely nothingness. At least, someone will say, there remains the possibility of successive implication between the nihilating processes. My establishment of Pierre's absence could still be determinant for my regret at not seeing him; you have not excluded the possibility of a determinism of nihilations. But aside from the fact that the original nihilation of the series must necessarily be disconnected from the prior positive processes, what can be the meaning of a motivation of nothingness by nothingness? A being indeed can *nihilate itself* perpetually, but to the extent that it nihilates itself, it foregoes being the origin of another phenomenon, even of a second nihilation.

It remains to explain what this separation is, this disengaging of consciousness which conditions every negation. If we consider the prior con-

consciousness envisaged as motivation, we see suddenly and evidently that *nothing* has just slipped in between that state and the present state. There has been no break in continuity within the flux of the temporal development, for that would force us to return to the inadmissible concept of the infinite divisibility of time and of the temporal point or instant as the limit of the division. Neither has there been an abrupt interpolation of an opaque element to separate prior from subsequent in the way that a knife blade cuts a piece of fruit in two. Nor is there a *weakening* of the motivating force of the prior consciousness; it remains what it is, it does not lose anything of its urgency. What separates prior from subsequent is exactly *nothing*. This nothing is absolutely impassable, just because it is nothing; for in every obstacle to be cleared there is something positive which gives itself as about to be cleared. The prior consciousness is always there (though with the modification of "pastness"). It constantly maintains a relation of interpretation with the present consciousness, but on the basis of this existential relation it is put out of the game, out of the circuit, between parentheses—exactly as in the eyes of one practicing the phenomenological *ἐποχή*, the world both is within him and outside of him.

Thus the condition on which human reality can deny all or part of the world is that human reality carry nothingness within itself as the *nothing* which separates its present from all its past. But this is still not all, for the *nothing* envisaged would not yet have the sense of nothingness; a suspension of being which would remain unnamed, which would not be consciousness of suspending being would come from outside consciousness and by reintroducing opacity into the heart of this absolute lucidity, would have the effect of cutting it in two.¹⁷ Furthermore this nothing would by no means be negative. Nothingness, as we have seen above, is the ground of the negation because it conceals the negation within itself, because it is the negation as being. It is necessary then that conscious being constitute itself in relation to its past as separated from this past by a nothingness. It must necessarily be conscious of this cleavage in being, but not as a phenomenon which it experiences, rather as a structure of consciousness which it is. Freedom is the human being putting his past out of play by secreting his own nothingness. Let us understand indeed that this original necessity of being its own nothingness does not belong to consciousness intermittently and on the occasion of particular negations. This does not happen just at a particular moment in psychic life when negative or interrogative attitudes appear; consciousness continually experiences itself as the nihilation of its past being.

But someone doubtless will believe that he can use against us here an objection which we have frequently raised ourselves: if the nihilating consciousness exists only as consciousness of nihilation, we ought to be

¹⁷ See *Introduction*: III.

able to define and describe a constant mode of consciousness, present *qua* consciousness, which would be consciousness of nihilation. Does this consciousness exist? Behold a new question has been raised here: if freedom is the being of consciousness, consciousness ought to exist a consciousness of freedom. What form does this consciousness of freedom assume? In freedom the human being is his own past (as also his own future) in the form of nihilation. If our analysis has not led us astray, there ought to exist for the human being, in so far as he is conscious of being, a certain mode of standing opposite his past and his future, as being both this past and this future and as not being them. We shall be able to furnish an immediate reply to this question; it is in anguish that man gets the consciousness of his freedom, or if you prefer, anguish is the mode of being of freedom as consciousness of being; it is in anguish that freedom is, in its being, in question for itself.

Kierkegaard describing anguish in the face of what one lacks characterizes it as anguish in the face of freedom. But Heidegger, whom we know to have been greatly influenced by Kierkegaard,¹⁸ considers anguish instead as the apprehension of nothingness. These two descriptions of anguish do not appear to us contradictory; on the contrary the one implies the other.

First we must acknowledge that Kierkegaard is right; anguish is distinguished from fear in that fear is fear of beings in the world whereas anguish is anguish before myself. Vertigo is anguish to the extent that I am afraid not of falling over the precipice, but of throwing myself over. A situation provokes fear if there is a possibility of my life being changed from without; my being provokes anguish to the extent that I distrust myself and my own reactions in that situation. The artillery preparation which precedes the attack can provoke fear in the soldier who undergoes the bombardment, but anguish is born in him when he tries to foresee the conduct with which he will face the bombardment, when he asks himself if he is going to be able to "hold up." Similarly the recruit who reports for active duty at the beginning of the war can in some instances be afraid of death, but more often he is "afraid of being afraid;" that is, he is filled with anguish before himself. Most of the time dangerous or threatening situations present themselves in facets; they will be apprehended through a feeling of fear or of anguish according to whether we envisage the situation as acting on the man or the man as acting on the situation. The man who has just received a hard blow—for example, losing a great part of his wealth in a crash—can have the fear of threatening poverty. He will experience anguish a moment later when nervously wringing his hands (a symbolic reaction to the action which is imposed but which remains still wholly undetermined), he exclaims to himself: "What

¹⁸ J. Wahl: *Etudes Kierkegaardienes*, Kierkegaard et Heidegger.

am I going to do? But what am I going to do?" In this sense fear and anguish are exclusive of one another since fear is unreflective apprehension of the transcendent and anguish is reflective apprehension of the self; the one is born in the destruction of the other. The normal process in the case which I have just cited is a constant transition from the one to the other. But there exist also situations where anguish appears pure; that is, without ever being preceded or followed by fear. If, for example, I have been raised to a new dignity and charged with a delicate and flattering mission, I can feel anguish at the thought that I will not be capable perhaps of fulfilling it, and yet I will not have the least fear in the world of the consequences of my possible failure.

What is the meaning of anguish in the various examples which I have just given? Let us take up again the example of vertigo. Vertigo announces itself through fear; I am on a narrow path—without a guard-rail—which goes along a precipice. The precipice presents itself to me as to be avoided; it represents a danger of death. At the same time I conceive of a certain number of causes, originating in universal determinism, which can transform that threat of death into reality; I can slip on a stone and fall into the abyss; the crumbling earth of the path can give way under my steps. Through these various anticipations, I am given to myself as a thing; I am passive in relation to these possibilities; they come to me from without; in so far as I am also an object in the world, subject to gravitation, they are my possibilities. At this moment fear appears, which in terms of the situation is the apprehension of myself as a destructible transcendent in the midst of transcendents, as an object which does not contain in itself the origin of its future disappearance. My reaction will be of the reflective order; I will pay attention to the stones in the road; I will keep myself as far as possible from the edge of the path. I realize myself as pushing away the threatening situation with all my strength, and I project before myself a certain number of future conducts destined to keep the threats of the world at a distance from me. These conducts are my possibilities. I escape fear by the very fact that I am placing myself on a plane where my own possibilities are substituted for the transcendent probabilities where human action had no place.

But these conducts, precisely because they are my possibilities, do not appear to me as determined by foreign causes. Not only is it not strictly certain that they will be effective; in particular it is not strictly certain that they will be adopted, for they do not have existence sufficient in itself. We could say, varying the expression of Berkeley, that their "being is a sustained-being" and that their "possibility of being is only an ought-to-be-sustained."¹⁹ Due to this fact their possibility has as a necessary condition the possibility of negative conduct (not to pay attention to the stones in the road, to run, to think of something else) and the pos-

¹⁹ We shall return to possibilities in the second part of this work.

sibility of the opposite conduct (to throw myself over the precipice). The possibility which I make my concrete possibility can appear as my possibility only by raising itself on the basis of the totality of the logical possibilities which the situation allows. But these rejected possibles in turn have no other being than their "sustained-being;" it is I who sustain them in being, and inversely, their present non-being is an "ought-not-to-be-sustained." No external cause will remove them. I alone am the permanent source of their non-being, I engage myself in them; in order to cause my possibility to appear, I posit the other possibilities so as to nihilate them. This would not produce anguish if I could apprehend myself in my relations with these possibles as a cause producing its effects. In this case the effect defined as my possibility would be strictly determined. But then it would cease to be possible; it would become simply "about-to-happen." If then I wished to avoid anguish and vertigo, it would be enough if I were to consider the motives (instinct of self-preservation, prior fear, etc.), which make me reject the situation envisaged, as determining my prior activity in the same way that the presence at a determined point of one given mass determines the courses followed by other masses; it would be necessary, in other words, that I apprehend in myself a strict psychological determinism. But I am in anguish precisely because any conduct on my part is only possible, and this means that while constituting a totality of motives for pushing away that situation, I at the same moment apprehend these motives as not sufficiently effective. At the very moment when I apprehend my being as horror of the precipice, I am conscious of that horror as not determinant in relation to my possible conduct. In one sense that horror calls for prudent conduct, and it is in itself a pre-outline of that conduct; in another sense, it posits the final developments of that conduct only as possible, precisely because I do not apprehend it as the cause of these final developments but as need, appeal, etc.

Now as we have seen, consciousness of being is the being of consciousness. There is no question here of a contemplation which I could make after the event, of an horror already constituted; it is the very being of horror to appear to itself as "not being the cause" of the conduct it calls for. In short, to avoid fear, which reveals to me a transcendent future strictly determined, I take refuge in reflection, but the latter has only an undetermined future to offer. This means that in establishing a certain conduct as a possibility and precisely because it is my possibility, I am aware that *nothing* can compel me to adopt that conduct. Yet I am indeed already there in the future; it is for the sake of that being which I will be there at the turning of the path that I now exert all my strength, and in this sense there is already a relation between my future being and my present being. But a nothingness has slipped into the heart of this relation; I am not the self which I will be. First I am not that self because

time separates me from it. Secondly, I am not that self because what I am is not the foundation of what I will be. Finally I am not that self because no actual existent can determine strictly what I am going to be. Yet as I am already what I will be (otherwise I would not be interested in any one being more than another), I am *the self which I will be, in the mode of not being it*. It is through my horror that I am carried toward the future, and the horror nihilates itself in that it constitutes the future as possible. Anguish is precisely my consciousness of being my own future, in the mode of not-being. To be exact, the nihilation of horror as a motive, which has the effect of reinforcing horror as a state, has as its positive counterpart the appearance of other forms of conduct (in particular that which consists in throwing myself over the precipice) as *my possible possibilities*. If *nothing* compels me to save my life, *nothing* prevents me from precipitating myself into the abyss. The decisive conduct will emanate from a self which I am not yet. Thus the self which I am depends on the self which I am not yet to the exact extent that the self which I am not yet does not depend on the self which I am. Vertigo appears as the apprehension of this dependence. I approach the precipice, and my scrutiny is searching for myself in my very depths. In terms of this moment, I play with my possibilities. My eyes, running over the abyss from top to bottom, imitate the possible fall and realize it symbolically; at the same time suicide, from the fact that it becomes a *possibility possible for me*, now causes to appear possible motives for adopting it (suicide would cause anguish' to cease). Fortunately these motives in their turn, from the sole fact that they are motives of a possibility, present themselves as ineffective, as non-determinant; they can no more produce the suicide than my horror of the fall can determine me to avoid it. It is this counter-anguish which generally puts an end to anguish by transmuting it into indecision. Indecision in its turn, calls for decision. I abruptly put myself at a distance from the edge of the precipice and resume my way.

The example which we have just analyzed has shown us what we could call "anguish in the face of the future." There exists another: anguish in the face of the past. It is that of the gambler who has freely and sincerely decided not to gamble any more and who when he approaches the gaming table, suddenly sees all his resolutions melt away. This phenomenon has often been described as if the sight of the gaming table reawakened in us a tendency which entered into conflict with our former resolution and ended by drawing us in spite of this. Aside from the fact that such a description is done in materialistic terms and peoples the mind with opposing forces (there is, for example, the moralists' famous "struggle of reason with the passions"), it does not account for the facts. In reality—the letters of Dostoevsky bear witness to this—there is nothing in us which resembles an inner debate as if we had to weigh motives and in-

centives before deciding. The earlier resolution of "not playing anymore" is always *there*, and in the majority of cases the gambler when in the presence of the gaming table, turns toward it as if to ask it for help; for he does not wish to play, or rather having taken his resolution the day before, he thinks of himself still as not wishing to play anymore; he believes in the effectiveness of this resolution. But what he apprehends then in anguish is precisely the total inefficacy of the past resolution. It is there doubtless but fixed, ineffectual, surpassed by the very fact that I am conscious of it. The resolution is still *me* to the extent that I realize constantly my identity with myself across the temporal flux, but it is no longer *me*—due to the fact that it has become an object for my consciousness. I am not subject to it, it fails in the mission which I have given it. The resolution is there still, I *am* it in the mode of not-being. What the gambler apprehends at this instant is again the permanent rupture in determinism; it is nothingness which separates him from himself; I should have liked so much not to gamble anymore; yesterday I even had a synthetic apprehension of the situation (threatening ruin, disappointment of my relatives) as *forbidding me* to play. It seemed to me that I had established a *real barrier* between gambling and myself, and now I suddenly perceive that my former understanding of the situation is no more than a memory of an idea, a memory of a feeling. In order for it to come to my aid once more, I must remake it *ex nihilo* and freely. The not-gambling is only one of my possibilities, as the fact of gambling is another of them, neither more nor less. I *must* rediscover the fear of financial ruin or of disappointing my family, etc., I must re-create it as experienced fear. It stands behind me like a boneless phantom. It depends on me alone to lend it flesh. I am alone and naked before temptation as I was the day before. After having patiently built up barriers and walls, after enclosing myself in the magic circle of a resolution, I perceive with anguish that *nothing* prevents me from gambling. The anguish is *me* since by the very fact of taking my position in existence as consciousness of being, I make myself *not to be* the past of good resolutions which I *am*.

It would be in vain to object that the sole condition of this anguish is ignorance of the underlying psychological determinism. According to such a view my anxiety would come from lack of knowing the real and effective incentives which in the darkness of the unconscious determine my action. In reply we shall point out first that anguish has not appeared to us as a *proof* of human freedom; the latter was given to us as the necessary condition for the question. We wished only to show that there exists a specific consciousness of freedom, and we wished to show that this consciousness is anguish. This means that we wished to establish anguish in its essential structure as consciousness of freedom. Now from this point of view the existence of a psychological determinism could not invalidate the results of our description. Either indeed anguish is actually an unrealized

ignorance of this determinism—and then anguish apprehends itself in fact as freedom—or else one may claim that anguish is consciousness of being ignorant of the real causes of our acts. In the latter case anguish would come from that of which we have a presentiment, a screen deep within ourselves for monstrous motives which would suddenly release guilty acts. But in this case we should suddenly appear to ourselves as *things in the world*; we should be to ourselves our own transcendent situation. Then anguish would disappear to give away to *fear*, for fear is a synthetic apprehension of the transcendent as dreadful.

This freedom which reveals itself to us in anguish can be characterized by the existence of that *nothing* which insinuates itself between motives and act. It is not because I am free that my act is not subject to the determination of motives; on the contrary, the structure of motives as ineffective is the condition of my freedom. If someone asks what this *nothing* is which provides a foundation for freedom, we shall reply that we can not describe it since it is *not*, but we can at least hint at its meaning by saying that this nothing is made-to-be by the human being in his relation with himself. The nothing here corresponds to the necessity for the motive to appear as motive only as a correlate of a consciousness of motive. In short, as soon as we abandon the hypothesis of the contents of consciousness, we must recognize that there is never a motive in consciousness; motives are only for consciousness. And due to the very fact that the motive can arise only as appearance, it constitutes itself as ineffective. Of course it does not have the externality of a temporal-spatial thing; it always belongs to subjectivity and it is apprehended as mine. But it is by nature transcendence in immanence, and consciousness is not subject to it because of the very fact that consciousness posits it; for consciousness has now the task of conferring on the motive its meaning and its importance. Thus the *nothing* which separates the motive from consciousness characterizes itself as transcendence in immanence. It is by arising as immanence that consciousness nihilates the nothing which makes consciousness exist for itself as transcendence. But we see that the nothingness which is the condition of all transcendent negation can be elucidated only in terms of two other original nihilations: (1) Consciousness is not its own motive inasmuch as it is empty of all content. This refers us to a nihilating structure of the pre-reflective cogito. (2) Consciousness confronts its past and its future as facing a self which it is in the mode of not-being. This refers us to a nihilating structure of temporality.

There can be for us as yet no question of elucidating these two types of nihilation; we do not at the moment have the necessary techniques at our disposal. It is sufficient to observe here that the definitive explanation of negation can not be given without a description of self-consciousness and of temporality.

What we should note at present is that freedom, which manifests itself

through anguish, is characterized by a constantly renewed obligation to remake the *Self* which designates the free being. As a matter of fact when we showed earlier that my possibilities were filled with anguish because it depended on me alone to sustain them in their existence, that did not mean that they derived from a *Me* which to itself at least, would first be given and would then pass in the temporal flux from one consciousness to another consciousness. The gambler who must realize anew the synthetic apperception of a situation which would forbid him to play, must rediscover at the same time the *self* which can appreciate that situation, which "is in situation." This *self* with its *a priori* and historical content is the essence of man. Anguish as the manifestation of freedom in the face of self means that man is always separated by a nothingness from his essence. We should refer here to Hegel's statement: "*Wesen ist was gewesen ist.*" Essence is what has been. Essence is everything in the human being which we can indicate by the words—that is. Due to this fact it is the totality of characteristics which explain the act. But the act is always beyond that essence; it is a human act only in so far as it surpasses every explanation which we can give of it, precisely because the very application of the formula "that is" to man causes all that is designated, to *have-been*. Man continually carries with him a pre-judicative comprehension of his essence, but due to this very fact he is separated from it by a nothingness. Essence is all that human reality apprehends in itself as *having been*. It is here that anguish appears as an apprehension of self inasmuch as it exists in the perpetual mode of detachment from what is; better yet, in so far as it makes itself exist as such. For we can never apprehend an *Erlebnis* as a living consequence of that nature which is ours. The overflow of our consciousness progressively constitutes that nature, but it remains always behind us and it dwells in us as the permanent object of our retrospective comprehension. It is in so far as this nature is a demand without being a recourse that it is apprehended in anguish.

In anguish freedom is anguished before itself inasmuch as it is instigated and bound by nothing. Someone will say, freedom has just been defined as a permanent structure of the human being; if anguish manifests it, then anguish ought to be a permanent state of my affectivity. But, on the contrary, it is completely exceptional. How can we explain the rarity of the phenomenon of anguish?

We must note first of all that the most common situations of our life, those in which we apprehend our possibilities as such by means of actively realizing them, do not manifest themselves to us through anguish because their very structure excludes anguished apprehension. Anguish in fact is the recognition of a possibility as my possibility; that is, it is constituted when consciousness sees itself cut from its essence by nothingness or separated from the future by its very freedom. This means that a

nihilating nothing removes from me all excuse and that at the same time what I project as my future being is always nihilated and reduced to the rank of simple possibility because the future which I am remains out of my reach. But we ought to remark that in these various instances we have to do with a temporal form where I await myself in the future, where I "make an appointment with myself on the other side of that hour, of that day, or of that month." Anguish is the fear of not finding myself at that appointment, of no longer even wishing to bring myself there. But I can also find myself engaged in acts which reveal my possibilities to me at the very instant when they are realized. In lighting this cigarette I learn my concrete possibility, or if you prefer, my desire of smoking. It is by the very act of drawing toward me this paper and this pen that I give to myself as my most immediate possibility the act of working at this book; there I am engaged, and I discover it at the very moment when I am already throwing myself into it. At that instant, to be sure, it remains my possibility, since I can at each instant turn myself away from my work, push away the notebook, put the cap on my fountain pen. But this possibility of interrupting the action is rejected on a second level by the fact that the action which discovers itself to me through my act tends to crystallize as a transcendent, relatively independent form. The consciousness of man in action is non-reflective consciousness. It is consciousness of something, and the transcendent which discloses itself to this consciousness is of a particular nature; it is a structure of exigency in the world, and the world correlatively discloses in it complex relations of instrumentality. In the act of tracing the letters which I am writing, the whole sentence, still unachieved, is revealed as a passive exigency to be written. It is the very meaning of the letters which I form, and its appeal is not put into question, precisely because I can not write the words without transcending them toward the sentence and because I discover it as the necessary condition for the meaning of the words which I am writing. At the same time in the very framework of the act an indicative complex of instruments reveals itself and organizes itself (pen-ink-paper-lines-margin, etc.), a complex which can not be apprehended for itself but which rises in the heart of the transcendence which discloses to me as a passive exigency the sentence to be written. Thus in the quasi-generality of every day acts, I am engaged, I have ventured, and I discover my possibilities by realizing them and in the very act of realizing them as exigencies, urgencies, instrumentalities.

Of course in every act of this kind, there remains the possibility of putting this act into question—in so far as it refers to more distant, more essential ends—as to its ultimate meanings and my essential possibilities. For example, the sentence which I write is the meaning of the letters which I trace, but the whole work which I wish to produce is the meaning of the sentence. And this work is a possibility in connection with which I

can feel anguish; it is truly *my* possibility, and I do not know whether I will continue it tomorrow; tomorrow in relation to it my freedom can exercise its nihilating power. But that anguish implies the apprehension of the work as such as *my* possibility. I must place myself directly opposite it and realize my relation to it. This means that I ought not only to raise with reference to it objective questions such as, "Is it necessary to write this work?" for these questions refer me simply to wider objective significations, such as, "Is it opportune to write it at this moment? Isn't this just a repetition of another such book? Is its material of sufficient interest? Has it been sufficiently thought through?" etc.—all significations which remain transcendent and give themselves as a multitude of exigencies in the world.

In order for my freedom to be anguished in connection with the book which I am writing, this book must appear in its relation with me. On the one hand, I must discover my essence as *what I have been*—I have been "wanting to write this book," I have conceived it, I have believed that it would be interesting to write it, and I have constituted myself in such a way that it is not possible to understand me without taking into account the fact that this book has been my essential possibility. On the other hand, I must discover the nothingness which separates my freedom from this essence: *I have been* "wanting to write," but *nothing*, not even what I have been, can compel me to write it. Finally, I must discover the nothingness which separates me from what I shall be: I discover that the permanent possibility of abandoning the book is the very condition of the possibility of writing it and the very meaning of my freedom. It is necessary that in the very constitution of the book as my possibility, I apprehend my freedom as being the possible destroyer in the present and in the future of what I am. That is, I must place myself on the plane of reflection. So long as I remain on the plane of action, the book to be written is only the distant and presupposed meaning of the act which reveals my possibilities to me. The book is only the implication of the action; it is not made an object and posited for itself; it does not "raise the question;" it is conceived neither as necessary nor contingent. It is only the permanent, remote meaning in terms of which I can understand what I am writing in the present, and hence, it is conceived as *being*; that is, only by positing the book as *the existing basis* on which my present, existing sentence emerges, can I confer a determined meaning upon my sentence.

Now at each instant we are thrust into the world and engaged there. This means that we act before positing our possibilities and that these possibilities which are disclosed as realized or in process of being realized refer to meanings which necessitate special acts in order to be put into question. The alarm which rings in the morning refers to the possibility of my going to work, which is *my* possibility. But to apprehend the sum-

mons of the alarm as a summons is to get up. Therefore the very act of getting up is reassuring, for it eludes the question, "Is work my possibility?" Consequently it does not put me in a position to apprehend the possibility of quietism, of refusing to work, and finally the possibility of refusing the world and the possibility of death. In short, to the extent that I apprehend the meaning of the ringing, I am already up at its summons; this apprehension guarantees me against the anguished intuition that it is I who confer on the alarm clock its exigency—I and I alone.

In the same way, what we might call everyday morality is exclusive of ethical anguish. There is ethical anguish when I consider myself in my original relation to values. Values in actuality are demands which lay claim to a foundation. But this foundation can in no way be being, for every value which would base its ideal nature on its being would thereby cease even to be a value and would realize the heteronomy of my will. Value derives its being from its exigency and not its exigency from its being. It does not deliver itself to a contemplative intuition which would apprehend it as being value and thereby would remove from it its right over my freedom. On the contrary, it can be revealed only to an active freedom which makes it exist as value by the sole fact of recognizing it as such. It follows that my freedom is the unique foundation of values and that *nothing*, absolutely nothing, justifies me in adopting this or that particular value, this or that particular scale of values. As a being by whom values exist, I am unjustifiable. My freedom is anguished at being the foundation of values while itself without foundation. It is anguished in addition because values, due to the fact that they are essentially revealed to a freedom, can not disclose themselves without being at the same time "put into question," for the possibility of overturning the scale of values appears complementarily as *my* possibility. It is anguish before values which is the recognition of the ideality of values.

Ordinarily, however, my attitude with respect to values is eminently reassuring. In fact I am engaged in a world of values. The anguished apprehension of values as sustained in being by my freedom is a secondary and mediated phenomenon. The immediate is the world with its urgency; and in this world where I engage myself, my acts cause values to spring up like partridges. My indignation has given to me the negative value "baseness," my admiration has given the positive value "grandeur." Above all my obedience to a multitude of tabus, which is real, reveals these tabus to me as existing in fact. The bourgeois who call themselves "respectable citizens" do not become respectable as the result of contemplating moral values. Rather from the moment of their arising in the world they are thrown into a pattern of behavior the meaning of which is respectability. Thus respectability acquires a being; it is not put into question. Values are sown on my path as thousands of little real demands, like the signs which order us to keep off the grass.

Thus in what we shall call the world of the immediate, which delivers itself to our unreflective consciousness, we do not first appear to ourselves, to be thrown subsequently into enterprises. Our being is immediately "in situation;" that is, it arises in enterprises and knows itself first in so far as it is reflected in those enterprises. We discover ourselves then in a world peopled with demands, in the heart of projects "in the course of realization." I write. I am going to smoke. I have an appointment this evening with Pierre. I must not forget to reply to Simon. I do not have the right to conceal the truth any longer from Claude. All these trivial passive expectations of the real, all these commonplace, everyday values, derive their meaning from an original projection of myself which stands as my choice of myself in the world. But to be exact, this projection of myself toward an original possibility, which causes the existence of values, appeals, expectations, and in general a world, appears to me only beyond the world as the meaning and the abstract, logical signification of my enterprises. For the rest, there exist concretely alarm clocks, signboards, tax forms, policemen, so many guard rails against anguish. But as soon as the enterprise is held at a distance from me, as soon as I am referred to myself because I must await myself in the future, then I discover myself suddenly as the one who gives its meaning to the alarm clock, the one who by a signboard forbids himself to walk on a flower bed or on the lawn, the one from whom the boss's order borrows its urgency, the one who decides the interest of the book which he is writing, the one finally who makes the values exist in order to determine his action by their demands. I emerge alone and in anguish confronting the unique and original project which constitutes my being; all the barriers, all the guard rails collapse, nihilated by the consciousness of my freedom. I do not have nor can I have recourse to any value against the fact that it is I who sustain values in being. Nothing can ensure me against myself, cut off from the world and from my essence by this nothingness which I am. I have to realize the meaning of the world and of my essence; I make my decision concerning them—without justification and without excuse.

Anguish then is the reflective apprehension of freedom by itself. In this sense it is mediation, for although it is immediate consciousness of itself, it arises from the negation of the appeals of the world. It appears at the moment that I disengage myself from the world where I had been engaged—in order to apprehend myself—as a consciousness which possesses a pre-ontological comprehension of its essence and a pre-judicative sense of its possibilities. Anguish is opposed to the mind of the serious man who apprehends values in terms of the world and who resides in the reassuring, materialistic substantiation of values. In the serious mood I define myself in terms of the object by pushing aside *a priori* as impossible all enterprises in which I am not engaged at the moment; the meaning which my freedom has given to the world, I apprehend as coming from the

world and constituting my obligations. In anguish I apprehend myself at once as totally free and as not being able to derive the meaning of the world except as coming from myself.

We should not however conclude that being brought on to the reflective plane and envisaging one's distant or immediate possibilities suffice to apprehend oneself in pure anguish. In each instance of reflection anguish is born as a structure of the reflective consciousness in so far as the latter considers consciousness as an object of reflection; but it still remains possible for me to maintain various types of conduct with respect to my own anguish—in particular, patterns of flight. Everything takes place, in fact, as if our essential and immediate behavior with respect to anguish is flight. Psychological determinism, before being a theoretical conception, is first an attitude of excuse, or if you prefer, the basis of all attitudes of excuse. It is reflective conduct with respect to anguish; it asserts that there are within us antagonistic forces whose type of existence is comparable to that of things. It attempts to fill the void which encircles us, to re-establish the links between past and present, between present and future. It provides us with a nature productive of our acts, and these very acts it makes transcendent; it assigns to them a foundation in something other than themselves by endowing them with an inertia and externality eminently reassuring because they constitute a permanent game of excuses. Psychological determinism denies that transcendence of human reality which makes it emerge in anguish beyond its own essence. At the same time by reducing us to *never being anything but what we are*, it reintroduces in us the absolute positivity of being-in-itself and thereby reinstates us at the heart of being.

But this determinism, a reflective defense against anguish, is not given as a reflective *intuition*. It avails nothing against the *evidence* of freedom; hence it is given as a faith to take refuge in, as the ideal end toward which we can flee to escape anguish. That is made evident on the philosophical plane by the fact that deterministic psychologists do not claim to found their thesis on the pure givens of introspection. They present it as a satisfying hypothesis, the value of which comes from the fact that it accounts for the facts—or as a necessary postulate for establishing all psychology. They admit the existence of an immediate consciousness of freedom, which their opponents hold up against them under the name of “proof by intuition of the inner sense.” They merely focus the debate on the value of this inner revelation. Thus the intuition which causes us to apprehend ourselves as the original cause of our states and our acts has been discussed by nobody. It is within the reach of each of us to try to mediate anguish by rising above it and by *judging* it as an illusion due to the mistaken belief that we are the real causes of our acts. The problem which presents itself then is that of the degree of faith in this mediation. Is an anguish placed under judgment a disarmed anguish? Evidently not. How-

ever here a new phenomenon is born, a process of "distraction" in relation to anguish which, once again, supposes within it a nihilating power.

By itself determinism would not suffice to establish distraction since determinism is only a postulate or an hypothesis. This process of detachment is a more complete activity of flight which operates on the very level of reflection. It is first an attempt at distraction in relation to the possibles opposed to my possible. When I constitute myself as the comprehension of a possible as my possible, I must recognize its existence at the end of my project and apprehend it as myself, awaiting me down there in the future and separated from me by a nothingness. In this sense I apprehend myself as the original source of my possibility, and it is this which ordinarily we call the consciousness of freedom. It is this structure of consciousness and this alone that the proponents of free-will have in mind when they speak of the intuition of the inner sense. But it happens that I force myself at the same time to be distracted from the constitution of other possibilities which contradict my possibility. In truth I can not avoid positing their existence by the same movement which generates the chosen possibility as mine. I cannot help constituting them as living possibilities; that is, as *having the possibility of becoming my possibilities*. But I force myself to see them as endowed with a transcendent, purely logical being, in short, as things. If on the reflective plane I envisage the possibility of writing this book as my possibility, then between this possibility and my consciousness I cause a nothingness of being to arise which constitutes the writing of the book as a possibility and which I apprehend precisely in the permanent possibility that the possibility of not writing the book is my possibility. But I attempt to place myself on the other side of the possibility of not writing it as I might do with respect to an observable object, and I let myself be penetrated with what I wish to see there; I try to apprehend the possibility of not writing as needing to be mentioned merely as a reminder, as not concerning me. It must be an external possibility in relation to me, like movement in relation to the motionless billiard ball. If I could succeed in this, the possibilities hostile to my possibility would be constituted as logical entities and would lose their effectiveness. They would no longer be threatening since they would be "outsiders," since they would surround my possible as purely conceivable eventualities; that is, fundamentally, conceivable by another or as *possibles of another who might find himself in the same situation*. They would belong to the objective situation as a transcendent structure, or if you prefer (to utilize Heidegger's terminology)—I shall write this book but someone could also not write it. Thus I should hide from myself the fact that the possibles are *myself* and that they are immanent conditions of the possibility of my possible. They would preserve just enough being to preserve for my possible its character as gratuitous, as a free possibility for a free being, but they would be

disarmed of their threatening character. They would not interest me; the chosen possible would appear—due to its selection—as my only concrete possible, and consequently the nothingness which separates me from it and which actually confers on it its possibility would collapse.

But flight before anguish is not only an effort at distraction before the future; it attempts also to disarm the past of its threat. What I attempt to flee here is my very transcendence in so far as it sustains and surpasses my essence. I assert that I am my essence in the mode of being of the in-itself. At the same time I always refuse to consider that essence as being historically constituted and as implying my action as a circle implies its properties. I apprehend it, or at least I try to apprehend it as the original beginning of my possible, and I do not admit at all that it has in itself a beginning. I assert then that an act is free when it exactly reflects my essence. However this freedom which would disturb me if it were freedom before myself, I attempt to bring back to the heart of my essence—i.e., of my self. It is a matter of envisaging the self as a little God which inhabits me and which possesses my freedom as a metaphysical virtue. It would be no longer my being which would be free qua being but my Self which would be free in the heart of my consciousness. It is a fiction eminently reassuring since freedom has been driven down into the heart of an opaque being; to the extent that my essence is not translucency, that it is transcendent in immanence, freedom would become one of its properties. In short, it is a matter of apprehending my freedom in my self as the freedom of another.¹⁹ We see the principal themes of this fiction: My self becomes the origin of its acts as the other of his, by virtue of a personality already constituted. To be sure, he (the self) lives and transforms himself; we will admit even that each of his acts can contribute to transforming him. But these harmonious, continued transformations are conceived on a biological order. They resemble those which I can establish in my friend Pierre when I see him after a separation. Bergson expressly satisfied these demands for reassurance when he conceived his theory of the profound self which endures and organizes itself, which is constantly contemporary with the consciousness which I have of it and which can not be surpassed by consciousness, which is found at the origin of my acts not as a cataclysmic power but as a father begets his children, in such a way that the act without following from the essence as a strict consequence, without even being foreseeable, enters into a reassuring relation with it, a family resemblance. The act goes farther than the self but along the same road; it preserves, to be sure, a certain irreducibility, but we recognize ourselves in it, and we find ourselves in it as a father can recognize himself and find himself in the son who continues his work. Thus by a projection of freedom—which we apprehend in ourselves—into a psychic object which is the self, Bergson has contributed to disguise our

¹⁹ Cf. Part III, ch. I.

anguish, but it is at the expense of consciousness itself. What he has established and described in this manner is not our freedom as it appears to itself; it is *the freedom of the Other*.

Such then is the totality of processes by which we try to hide anguish from ourselves; we apprehend our particular possible by avoiding considering all other possibles, which we make the possibles of an undifferentiated Other. The chosen possible we do not wish to see as sustained in being by a pure nihilating freedom, and so we attempt to apprehend it as engendered by an object already constituted, which is no other than our self, envisaged and described as if it were another person. We should like to preserve from the original intuition what it reveals to us as our independence and our responsibility but we tone down all the original nihilation in it; moreover we are always ready to take refuge in a belief in determinism if this freedom weighs upon us or if we need an excuse. Thus we flee from anguish by attempting to apprehend ourselves from without as an Other or as a *thing*. What we are accustomed to call a revelation of the inner sense or an original intuition of our freedom contains nothing original; it is an already constructed process, expressly designed to hide from ourselves anguish, the veritable "immediate given" of our freedom.

Do these various constructions succeed in stifling or hiding our anguish? It is certain that we can not overcome anguish, for we are anguish. As for veiling it, aside from the fact that the very nature of consciousness and its translucency forbid us to take the expression literally, we must note the particular type of behavior which it indicates. We can hide an external object because it exists independently of us. For the same reason we can turn our look or our attention away from it—that is, very simply, fix our eyes on some other object; henceforth each reality—mine and that of the object—resumes its own life, and the accidental relation which united consciousness to the thing disappears without thereby altering either existence. But if I am what I wish to veil, the question takes on quite another aspect. I can in fact wish "not to see" a certain aspect of my being only if I am acquainted with the aspect which I do not wish to see. This means that in my being I must indicate this aspect in order to be able to turn myself away from it; better yet, I must think of it constantly in order to take care not to think of it. In this connection it must be understood not only that I must of necessity perpetually carry within me what I wish to flee but also that I must aim at the object of my flight in order to flee it. This means that anguish, the intentional aim of anguish, and a flight from anguish toward reassuring myths must all be given in the unity of the same consciousness. In a word, I flee in order not to know, but I can not avoid knowing that I am fleeing; and the flight from anguish is only a mode of becoming conscious of anguish. Thus anguish, properly speaking, can be neither hidden nor avoided.

Yet to flee anguish and to be anguish can not be exactly the same thing. If I am my anguish in order to flee it, that presupposes that I can decenter myself in relation to what I am, that I can be anguish in the form of "not-being it," that I can dispose of a nihilating power at the heart of anguish itself. This nihilating power nihilates anguish in so far as I flee it and nihilates itself in so far as *I am anguish in order to flee it*. This attitude is what we call *bad faith*. There is then no question of expelling anguish from consciousness nor of constituting it in an unconscious psychic phenomenon; very simply I can make myself guilty of bad faith while apprehending the anguish which I am, and this bad faith, intended to fill up the nothingness which I am in my relation to myself, precisely implies the nothingness which it suppresses.

We are now at the end of our first description. The examination of the negation can not lead us farther. It has revealed to us the existence of a particular type of conduct: conduct in the face of non-being, which supposes a special transcendence needing separate study. We find ourselves then in the presence of two human ekstases: the ekstasis which throws us into being-in-itself and the ekstasis which engages us in non-being. It seems that our original problem, which concerned only the relations of man to being, is now considerably complicated. But in pushing our analysis of transcendence toward non-being to its conclusion, it is possible for us to get valuable information for the understanding of all transcendence. Furthermore the problem of nothingness can not be excluded from our inquiry. If man adopts any particular behavior in the face of being-in-itself—and our philosophical question is a type of such behavior—it is because he is *not* this being. We rediscover non-being as a condition of the transcendence toward being. We must then catch hold of the problem of nothingness and not let it go before its complete elucidation.

However the examination of the question and of the negation has given us all that it can. We have been referred by it to empirical freedom as the nihilation of man in the heart of temporality and as the necessary condition for the transcending apprehension of *néгатités*. It remains to found this empirical freedom. It can not be both the original nihilation and the ground of all nihilation. Actually it contributes to constituting transcendences in immanence which condition all negative transcendences. But the very fact that the transcendences of empirical freedom are constituted in immanence as *transcendences* shows us that we are dealing with secondary nihilations which suppose the existence of an original nothingness. They are only a stage in the analytical regression which leads us from the examples of transcendence called "néгатités" to the being which is its own nothingness. Evidently it is necessary to find the foundation of all negation in a nihilation which is exercised in *the very heart of immanence*; in absolute immanence, in the pure subjectivity of the instantaneous cogito we must discover the original act by which man

is to himself his own nothingness. What must be the nature of consciousness in order that man in consciousness and in terms of consciousness should arise in the world as the being who is his own nothingness and by whom nothingness comes into the world?

We seem to lack here the instrument to permit us to resolve this new problem; negation directly engages only freedom. We must find in freedom itself the conduct which will permit us to push further. Now this conduct, which will lead us to the threshold of immanence and which remains still sufficiently objective so that we can objectively disengage its conditions of possibility—this we have already encountered. Have we not remarked earlier that in bad faith, we are-anguish-in-order-to-flee-anguish within the unity of a single consciousness? If bad faith is to be possible, we should be able within the same consciousness to meet with the unity of being and non-being—the being-in-order-not-to-be. Bad faith is going to be the next object of our investigation. For man to be able to question, he must be capable of being his own nothingness; that is, he can be at the origin of non-being in being only if his being—in himself and by himself—is paralyzed with nothingness. Thus the transcendences of past and future appear in the temporal being of human reality. But bad faith is instantaneous. What then are we to say that consciousness must be in the instantaneity of the pre-reflective cogito—if the human being is to be capable of bad faith?

CHAPTER TWO

Bad Faith

I. BAD FAITH AND FALSEHOOD

THE human being is not only the being by whom *néгатités* are disclosed in the world; he is also the one who can take negative attitudes with respect to himself. In our Introduction we defined consciousness as "a being such that in its being, its being is in question in so far as this being implies a being other than itself." But now that we have examined the meaning of "the question," we can at present also write the formula thus: "Consciousness is a being, the nature of which is to be conscious of the nothingness of its being." In a prohibition or a veto, for example, the human being denies a future transcendence. But this negation is not explicative. My consciousness is not restricted to *envisioning* a *néгатité*. It constitutes itself in its own flesh as the nihilation of a possibility which another human reality projects as *its* possibility. For that reason it must arise in the world as a *Not*; it is as a *Not* that the slave first apprehends the master, or that the prisoner who is trying to escape sees the guard who is watching him. There are even men (e.g., caretakers, overseers, gaolers,) whose social reality is uniquely that of the *Not*, who will live and die, having forever been only a *Not* upon the earth. Others so as to make the *Not* a part of their very subjectivity, establish their human personality as a perpetual negation. This is the meaning and function of what Scheler calls "the man of resentment"—in reality, the *Not*. But there exist more subtle behaviors, the description of which will lead us further into the inwardness of consciousness. Irony is one of these. In irony a man annihilates what he posits within one and the same act; he leads us to believe in order not to be believed; he affirms to deny and denies to affirm; he creates a positive object but it has no being other than its nothingness. Thus attitudes of negation toward the self permit us to raise a new question: What are we to say is the being of man who has the possibility of denying himself? But it is out of the question to discuss the attitude of "self-negation" in its universality. The kinds of behavior which can be

ranked under this heading are too diverse; we risk retaining only the abstract form of them. It is best to choose and to examine one determined attitude which is essential to human reality and which is such that consciousness instead of directing its negation outward turns it toward itself. This attitude, it seems to me, is *bad faith* (*mauvaise foi*).

Frequently this is identified with falsehood. We say indifferently of a person that he shows signs of bad faith or that he lies to himself. We shall willingly grant that bad faith is a lie to oneself, on condition that we distinguish the lie to oneself from lying in general. Lying is a negative attitude, we will agree to that. But this negation does not bear on consciousness itself; it aims only at the transcendent. The essence of the lie implies in fact that the liar actually is in complete possession of the truth which he is hiding. A man does not lie about what he is ignorant of; he does not lie when he spreads an error of which he himself is the dupe; he does not lie when he is mistaken. The ideal description of the liar would be a cynical consciousness, affirming truth within himself, denying it in his words, and denying that negation as such. Now this doubly negative attitude rests on the transcendent; the fact expressed is transcendent since it does not exist, and the original negation rests on a *truth*; that is, on a particular type of transcendence. As for the inner negation which I effect correlatively with the affirmation for myself of the truth, this rests on words; that is, on an event in the world. Furthermore the inner disposition of the liar is positive; it could be the object of an affirmative judgment. The liar intends to deceive and he does not seek to hide this intention from himself nor to disguise the translucency of consciousness; on the contrary, he has recourse to it when there is a question of deciding secondary behavior. It explicitly exercises a regulatory control over all attitudes. As for his flaunted intention of telling the truth ("I'd never want to deceive you! This is true! I swear it!")—all this, of course, is the object of an inner negation, but also it is not recognized by the liar as *his* intention. It is played, imitated, it is the intention of the character which he plays in the eyes of his questioner, but this character, precisely because he does not exist, is a transcendent. Thus the lie does not put into the play the inner structure of present consciousness; all the negations which constitute it bear on objects which by this fact are removed from consciousness. The lie then does not require special ontological foundation, and the explanations which the existence of negation in general requires are valid without change in the case of deceit. Of course we have described the ideal lie; doubtless it happens often enough that the liar is more or less the victim of his lie, that he half persuades himself of it. But these common, popular forms of the lie are also degenerate aspects of it; they represent intermediaries between falsehood and bad faith. The lie is a behavior of transcendence.

The lie is also a normal phenomenon of what Heidegger calls the "Mit-

sein."¹ It presupposes my existence, the existence of the Other, my existence for the Other, and the existence of the Other for me. Thus there is no difficulty in holding that the liar must make the project of the lie in entire clarity and that he must possess a complete comprehension of the lie and of the truth which he is altering. It is sufficient that an over-all opacity hide his intentions from the Other; it is sufficient that the Other can take the lie for truth. By the lie consciousness affirms that it exists by nature as *hidden from the Other*; it utilizes for its own profit the ontological duality of myself and myself in the eyes of the Other.

The situation can not be the same for bad faith if this, as we have said, is indeed a lie to oneself. To be sure, the one who practices bad faith is hiding a displeasing truth or presenting as truth a pleasing untruth. Bad faith then has in appearance the structure of falsehood. Only what changes everything is the fact that in bad faith it is from myself that I am hiding the truth. Thus the duality of the deceiver and the deceived does not exist here. Bad faith on the contrary implies in essence the unity of a single consciousness. This does not mean that it can not be conditioned by the *Mit-sein* like all other phenomena of human reality, but the *Mit-sein* can call forth bad faith only by presenting itself as a *situation* which bad faith permits surpassing; bad faith does not come from outside to human reality. One does not undergo his bad faith; one is not infected with it; it is not a *state*. But consciousness affects itself with bad faith. There must be an original intention and a project of bad faith; this project implies a comprehension of bad faith as such and a pre-reflective apprehension (of) consciousness as affecting itself with bad faith. It follows first that the one to whom the lie is told and the one who lies are one and the same person, which means that I must know in my capacity as deceiver the truth which is hidden from me in my capacity as the one deceived. Better yet I must know the truth very exactly in order to conceal it more carefully—and this not at two different moments, which at a pinch would allow us to re-establish a semblance of duality—but in the unitary structure of a single project. How then can the lie subsist if the duality which conditions it is suppressed?

To this difficulty is added another which is derived from the total translucency of consciousness. That which affects itself with bad faith must be conscious (of) its bad faith since the being of consciousness is consciousness of being. It appears then that I must be in good faith, at least to the extent that I am conscious of my bad faith. But then this whole psychic system is annihilated. We must agree in fact that if I deliberately and cynically attempt to lie to myself, I fail completely in this undertaking; the lie falls back and collapses beneath my look; it is ruined *from behind* by the very consciousness of lying to myself which pitilessly constitutes

¹ A "being-with" others in the world. Tr.

itself well within my project as its very condition. We have here an evanescent phenomenon which exists only in and through its own differentiation. To be sure, these phenomena are frequent and we shall see that there is in fact an "evanescence" of bad faith, which, it is evident, vacillates continually between good faith and cynicism: Even though the existence of bad faith is very precarious, and though it belongs to the kind of psychic structures which we might call "metastable,"² it presents nonetheless an autonomous and durable form. It can even be the normal aspect of life for a very great number of people. A person can *live* in bad faith, which does not mean that he does not have abrupt awakenings to cynicism or to good faith, but which implies a constant and particular style of life. Our embarrassment then appears extreme since we can neither reject nor comprehend bad faith.

To escape from these difficulties people gladly have recourse to the unconscious. In the psychoanalytical interpretation, for example, they use the hypothesis of a censor, conceived as a line of demarcation with customs, passport division, currency control, etc., to reestablish the duality of the deceiver and the deceived. Here instinct or, if you prefer, original drives and complexes of drives constituted by our individual history, make up *reality*. It is neither true nor false since it does not exist for itself. It simply is, exactly like this table, which is neither true nor false *in itself* but simply *real*. As for the conscious symbols of the instinct, this interpretation takes them not for appearances but for real psychic facts. Fear, forgetting, dreams exist really in the capacity of concrete facts of consciousness in the same way as the words and the attitudes of the liar are concrete, really existing patterns of behavior. The subject has the same relation to these phenomena as the deceived to the behavior of the deceiver. He establishes them in their reality and must interpret them. There is a truth in the activities of the deceiver; if the deceived could reattach them to the situation where the deceiver establishes himself and to his project of the lie, they would become integral parts of truth, by virtue of being lying conduct. Similarly there is a truth in the symbolic acts; it is what the psychoanalyst discovers when he reattaches them to the historical situation of the patient, to the unconscious complexes which they express, to the blocking of the censor. Thus the subject deceives himself about the *meaning* of his conduct, he apprehends it in its concrete existence but not in its *truth*, simply because he cannot derive it from an original situation and from a psychic constitution which remain alien to him.

By the distinction between the "id" and the "ego," Freud has cut the psychic whole into two. I *am* the ego but I *am not* the *id*. I hold no privileged position in relation to my unconscious psyche. I *am* my own psychic phenomena in so far as I establish them in their conscious reality. For

² Sartre's own word, meaning subject to sudden changes or transitions. Tr.

example I am the impulse to steal this or that book from this bookstall. I am an integral part of the impulse; I bring it to light and I determine myself hand-in-hand with it to commit the theft. But I am not those psychic facts, in so far as I receive them passively and am obliged to resort to hypotheses about their origin and their true meaning, just as the scholar makes conjectures about the nature and essence of an external phenomenon. This theft, for example, which I interpret as an immediate impulse determined by the rarity, the interest, or the price of the volume which I am going to steal—it is in truth a process derived from self-punishment, which is attached more or less directly to an Oedipus complex. The impulse toward the theft contains a truth which can be reached only by more or less probable hypotheses. The criterion of this truth will be the number of conscious psychic facts which it explains; from a more pragmatic point of view it will be also the success of the psychiatric cure which it allows. Finally the discovery of this truth will necessitate the cooperation of the psychoanalyst, who appears as the mediator between my unconscious drives and my conscious life. The Other appears as being able to effect the synthesis between the unconscious thesis and the conscious antithesis. I can know myself only through the mediation of the other, which means that I stand in relation to my "id," in the position of the Other. If I have a little knowledge of psychoanalysis, I can, under circumstances particularly favorable, try to psychoanalyze myself. But this attempt can succeed only if I distrust every kind of intuition, only if I apply to my case from the outside, abstract schemes and rules already learned. As for the results, whether they are obtained by my efforts alone or with the cooperation of a technician, they will never have the certainty which intuition confers; they will possess simply the always increasing probability of scientific hypotheses. The hypothesis of the Oedipus complex, like the atomic theory, is nothing but an "experimental idea;" as Pierce said, it is not to be distinguished from the totality of experiences which it allows to be realized and the results which it enables us to foresee. Thus psychoanalysis substitutes for the notion of bad faith, the idea of a lie without a liar; it allows me to understand how it is possible for me to be lied to without lying to myself since it places me in the same relation to myself that the Other is in respect to me; it replaces the duality of the deceiver and the deceived, the essential condition of the lie, by that of the "id" and the "ego." It introduces into my subjectivity the deepest intersubjective structure of the *Mit-sein*. Can this explanation satisfy us?

Considered more closely the psychoanalytic theory is not as simple as it first appears. It is not accurate to hold that the "id" is presented as a thing in relation to the hypothesis of the psychoanalyst, for a thing is indifferent to the conjectures which we make concerning it, while the "id" on the contrary is sensitive to them when we approach the truth. Freud in fact reports resistance when at the end of the first period the doctor is

approaching the truth. This resistance is objective behavior apprehended from without: the patient shows defiance, refuses to speak, gives fantastic accounts of his dreams, sometimes even removes himself completely from the psychoanalytic treatment. It is a fair question to ask what part of himself can thus resist. It can not be the "Ego," envisaged as a psychic totality of the facts of consciousness; this could not suspect that the psychiatrist is approaching the end since the ego's relation to the meaning of its own reactions is exactly like that of the psychiatrist himself. At the very most it is possible for the ego to appreciate objectively the degree of probability in the hypotheses set forth, as a witness of the psychoanalysis might be able to do, according to the number of subjective facts which they explain. Furthermore, this probability would appear to the ego to border on certainty, which he could not take offence at since most of the time it is he who by a conscious decision is in pursuit of the psychoanalytic therapy. Are we to say that the patient is disturbed by the daily revelations which the psychoanalyst makes to him and that he seeks to remove himself, at the same time pretending in his own eyes to wish to continue the treatment? In this case it is no longer possible to resort to the unconscious to explain bad faith; it is there in full consciousness, with all its contradictions. But this is not the way that the psychoanalyst means to explain this resistance; for him it is secret and deep, it comes from afar; it has its roots in the very thing which the psychoanalyst is trying to make clear.

Furthermore it is equally impossible to explain the resistance as emanating from the complex which the psychoanalyst wishes to bring to light. The complex as such is rather the collaborator of the psychoanalyst since it aims at expressing itself in clear consciousness, since it plays tricks on the censor and seeks to elude it. The only level on which we can locate the refusal of the subject is that of the censor. It alone can comprehend the questions or the revelations of the psychoanalyst as approaching more or less near to the real drives which it strives to repress—it alone because it alone knows what it is repressing.

If we reject the language and the materialistic mythology of psychoanalysis, we perceive that the censor in order to apply its activity with discernment must know what it is repressing. In fact if we abandon all the metaphors representing the repression as the impact of blind forces, we are compelled to admit that the censor must choose and in order to choose must be aware of so doing. How could it happen otherwise that the censor allows lawful sexual impulses to pass through, that it permits needs (hunger, thirst, sleep) to be expressed in clear consciousness? And how are we to explain that it can relax its surveillance, that it can even be deceived by the disguises of the instinct? But it is not sufficient that it discern the condemned drives; it must also apprehend them as to be repressed, which implies in it at the very least an awareness of its activity. In a word, how could the censor discern the impulses needing to be repressed without

being conscious of discerning them? How can we conceive of a knowledge which is ignorant of itself? To know is to know that one knows, said Alain. Let us say rather: All knowing is consciousness of knowing. Thus the resistance of the patient implies on the level of the censor an awareness of the thing repressed as such, a comprehension of the end toward which the questions of the psychoanalyst are leading, and an act of synthetic connection by which it compares the truth of the repressed complex to the psychoanalytic hypothesis which aims at it. These various operations in their turn imply that the censor is conscious (of) itself. But what type of self-consciousness can the censor have? It must be the consciousness (of) being conscious of the drive to be repressed, but precisely in order not be conscious of it. What does this mean if not that the censor is in bad faith?

Psychoanalysis has not gained anything for us since in order to overcome bad faith, it has established between the unconscious and consciousness an autonomous consciousness in bad faith. The effort to establish a veritable duality and even a trinity (*Es, Ich, Ueberich* expressing themselves through the censor) has resulted in a mere verbal terminology. The very essence of the reflexive idea of hiding something from oneself implies the unity of one and the same psychic mechanism and consequently a double activity in the heart of unity, tending on the one hand to maintain and locate the thing to be concealed and on the other hand to repress and disguise it. Each of the two aspects of this activity is complementary to the other; that is, it implies the other in its being. By separating consciousness from the unconscious by means of the censor, psychoanalysis has not succeeded in dissociating the two phases of the act, since the libido is a blind conatus toward conscious expression and since the conscious phenomenon is a passive, faked result. Psychoanalysis has merely localized this double activity of repulsion and attraction on the level of the censor.

Furthermore the problem still remains of accounting for the unity of the total phenomenon (repression of the drive which disguises itself and "passes" in symbolic form), to establish comprehensible connections among its different phases. How can the repressed drive "disguise itself" if it does not include (1) the consciousness of being repressed, (2) the consciousness of having been pushed back because it is what it is, (3) a project of disguise? No mechanistic theory of condensation or of transference can explain these modifications by which the drive itself is affected, for the description of the process of disguise implies a veiled appeal to finality. And similarly how are we to account for the pleasure or the anguish which accompanies the symbolic and conscious satisfaction of the drive if consciousness does not include—beyond the censor—an obscure comprehension of the end to be attained as simultaneously desired and forbidden. By rejecting the conscious unity of the psyche, Freud is obliged to imply everywhere a magic unity linking distant phenomena across obstacles, just as sympathetic magic unites the spellbound person and the wax

image fashioned in his likeness. The unconscious drive (*Trieb*) through magic is endowed with the character "repressed" or "condemned," which completely pervades it, colors it, and magically provokes its symbolism. Similarly the conscious phenomenon is entirely colored by its symbolic meaning although it can not apprehend this meaning by itself in clear consciousness.

Aside from its inferiority in principle, the explanation by magic does not avoid the coexistence—on the level of the unconscious, on that of the censor, and on that of consciousness—of two contradictory, complementary structures which reciprocally imply and destroy each other. Proponents of the theory have hypostasized and "reified" bad faith; they have not escaped it. This is what has inspired a Viennese psychiatrist, Steckel, to depart from the psychoanalytical tradition and to write in *La femme frigide*:³ "Every time that I have been able to carry my investigations far enough, I have established that the crux of the psychosis was conscious." In addition the cases which he reports in his work bear witness to a pathological bad faith which the Freudian doctrine can not account for. There is the question, for example, of women whom marital infidelity has made frigid; that is, they succeed in hiding from themselves not complexes deeply sunk in half physiological darkness, but acts of conduct which are objectively discoverable, which they can not fail to record at the moment when they perform them. Frequently in fact the husband reveals to Steckel that his wife has given objective signs of pleasure, but the woman when questioned will fiercely deny them. Here we find a pattern of distraction. Admissions which Steckel was able to draw out inform us that these pathologically frigid women apply themselves to becoming distracted in advance from the pleasure which they dread; many for example at the time of the sexual act, turn their thoughts away toward their daily occupations, make up their household accounts. Will anyone speak of an unconscious here? Yet if the frigid woman thus distracts her consciousness from the pleasure which she experiences, it is by no means cynically and in full agreement with herself; it is in order to prove to herself that she is frigid. We have in fact to deal with a phenomenon of bad faith since the efforts taken in order not to be present to the experienced pleasure imply the recognition that the pleasure is experienced; they imply it in order to deny it. But we are no longer on the ground of psychoanalysis. Thus on the one hand the explanation by means of the unconscious, due to the fact that it breaks the psychic unity, can not account for the facts which at first sight it appeared to explain. And on the other hand, there exists an infinity of types of behavior in bad faith which explicitly reject this kind of explanation because their essence implies that they can appear only in the translucency of consciousness. We find that the problem which we had attempted to resolve is still untouched.

³ N.R.F.

II. PATTERNS OF BAD FAITH

IF we wish to get out of this difficulty, we should examine more closely the patterns of bad faith and attempt a description of them. This description will permit us perhaps to fix more exactly the conditions for the possibility of bad faith; that is, to reply to the question we raised at the outset: "What must be the being of man if he is to be capable of bad faith?"

Take the example of a woman who has consented to go out with a particular man for the first time. She knows very well the intentions which the man who is speaking to her cherishes regarding her. She knows also that it will be necessary sooner or later for her to make a decision. But she does not want to realize the urgency; she concerns herself only with what is respectful and discreet in the attitude of her companion. She does not apprehend this conduct as an attempt to achieve what we call "the first approach;" that is, she does not want to see possibilities of temporal development which his conduct presents. She restricts this behavior to what is in the present; she does not wish to read in the phrases which he addresses to her anything other than their explicit meaning. If he says to her, "I find you so attractive!" she disarms this phrase of its sexual background; she attaches to the conversation and to the behavior of the speaker, the immediate meanings, which she imagines as objective qualities. The man who is speaking to her appears to her sincere and respectful as the table is round or square, as the wall coloring is blue or gray. The qualities thus attached to the person she is listening to are in this way fixed in a permanence like that of things, which is no other than the projection of the strict present of the qualities into the temporal flux. This is because she does not quite know what she wants. She is profoundly aware of the desire which she inspires, but the desire cruel and naked would humiliate and horrify her. Yet she would find no charm in a respect which would be only respect. In order to satisfy her, there must be a feeling which is addressed wholly to her *personality*—i.e., to her full freedom—and which would be a recognition of her freedom. But at the same time this feeling must be wholly desire; that is, it must address itself to her body as object. This time then she refuses to apprehend the desire for what it is; she does not even give it a name; she recognizes it only to the extent that it transcends itself toward admiration, esteem, respect and that it is wholly absorbed in the more refined forms which it produces, to the extent of no longer figuring anymore as a sort of warmth and density. But then suppose he takes her hand. This act of her companion risks changing the situation by calling for an immediate decision. To leave the hand there is to consent in herself to flirt, to engage herself. To withdraw it is to break the troubled and unstable harmony which gives the hour its charm. The aim is to postpone the moment of decision as long as possible. We know what happens next; the young woman leaves her hand there, but she does not notice that she

is leaving it. She does not notice because it happens by chance that she is at this moment all intellect. She draws her companion up to the most lofty regions of sentimental speculation; she speaks of Life, of her life, she shows herself in her essential aspect—a personality, a consciousness. And during this time the divorce of the body from the soul is accomplished; the hand rests inert between the warm hands of her companion—neither consenting nor resisting—a thing.

We shall say that this woman is in bad faith. But we see immediately that she uses various procedures in order to maintain herself in this bad faith. She has disarmed the actions of her companion by reducing them to being only what they are; that is, to existing in the mode of the in-itself. But she permits herself to enjoy his desire, to the extent that she will apprehend it as not being what it is, will recognize its transcendence. Finally while sensing profoundly the presence of her own body—to the degree of being disturbed perhaps—she realizes herself as *not being* her own body, and she contemplates it as though from above as a passive object to which events can happen but which can neither provoke them nor avoid them because all its possibilities are outside of it. What unity do we find in these various aspects of bad faith? It is a certain art of forming contradictory concepts which unite in themselves both an idea and the negation of that idea. The basic concept which is thus engendered, utilizes the double property of the human being, who is at once a facticity and a transcendence. These two aspects of human reality are and ought to be capable of a valid coordination. But bad faith does not wish either to coordinate them nor to surmount them in a synthesis. Bad faith seeks to affirm their identity while preserving their differences. It must affirm facticity as *being* transcendence and transcendence as *being* facticity, in such a way that at the instant when a person apprehends the one, he can find himself abruptly faced with the other.

We can find the prototype of formulae of bad faith in certain famous expressions which have been rightly conceived to produce their whole effect in a spirit of bad faith. Take for example the title of a work by Jacques Chardonne, *Love Is Much More than Love*.⁴ We see here how unity is established between present love in its facticity—"the contact of two skins," sensuality, egoism, Proust's mechanism of jealousy, Adler's battle of the sexes, etc.—and love as transcendence—Mauriac's "river of fire," the longing for the infinite, Plato's eros, Lawrence's deep cosmic intuition, etc. Here we leave facticity to find ourselves suddenly beyond the present and the factual condition of man, beyond the psychological, in the heart of metaphysics. On the other hand, the title of a play by Sarmant, *I Am Too Great for Myself*,⁵ which also presents characters in bad

⁴ *L'amour, c'est beaucoup plus que l'amour.*

⁵ *Je suis trop grand pour moi.*

faith, throws us first into full transcendence in order suddenly to imprison us within the narrow limits of our factual essence. We will discover this structure again in the famous sentence: "He has become what he was" or in its no less famous opposite: "Eternity at last changes each man into himself."⁶ It is well understood that these various formulae have only the appearance of bad faith; they have been conceived in this paradoxical form explicitly to shock the mind and discountenance it by an enigma. But it is precisely this appearance which is of concern to us. What counts here is that the formulae do not constitute new, solidly structured ideas; on the contrary, they are formed so as to remain in perpetual disintegration and so that we may slide at any time from naturalistic present to transcendence and vice versa.

We can see the use which bad faith can make of these judgments which all aim at establishing that I am not what I am. If I were only what I am, I could, for example, seriously consider an adverse criticism which someone makes of me, question myself scrupulously, and perhaps be compelled to recognize the truth in it. But thanks to transcendence, I am not subject to all that I am. I do not even have to discuss the justice of the reproach. As Suzanne says to Figaro, "To prove that I am right would be to recognize that I can be wrong." I am on a plane where no reproach can touch me since what I really am is my transcendence. I flee from myself, I escape myself, I leave my tattered garment in the hands of the fault-finder. But the ambiguity necessary for bad faith comes from the fact that I affirm here that I am my transcendence in the mode of being of a thing. It is only thus, in fact, that I can feel that I escape all reproaches. It is in the sense that our young woman purifies the desire of anything humiliating by being willing to consider it only as pure transcendence, which she avoids even naming. But inversely "I Am Too Great for Myself," while showing our transcendence changed into facticity, is the source of an infinity of excuses for our failures or our weaknesses. Similarly the young coquette maintains transcendence to the extent that the respect, the esteem manifested by the actions of her admirer are already on the plane of the transcendent. But she arrests this transcendence, she glues it down with all the facticity of the present; respect is nothing other than respect, it is an arrested surpassing which no longer surpasses itself toward anything.

But although this metastable concept of "transcendence-facticity" is one of the most basic instruments of bad faith, it is not the only one of its kind. We can equally well use another kind of duplicity derived from human reality which we will express roughly by saying that its being-for-itself implies complementarily a being-for-others. Upon any one of my conducts it is always possible to converge two looks, mine and that of the Other. The conduct will not present exactly the same structure in each case. But

⁶ *Il est devenu ce qu'il était.*

Tel qu'en lui-même enfin l'éternité le change.

as we shall see later, as each look perceives it, there is between these two aspects of my being, no difference between appearance and being—as if I were to my self the truth of myself and as if the Other possessed only a deformed image of me. The equal dignity of being, possessed by my being-for-others and by my being-for-myself permits a perpetually disintegrating synthesis and a perpetual game of escape from the for-itself to the for-others and from the for-others to the for-itself. We have seen also the use which our young lady made of our being-in-the-midst-of-the-world—i.e., of our inert presence as a passive object among other objects—in order to relieve herself suddenly from the functions of her being-in-the-world—that is, from the being which causes there to be a world by projecting itself beyond the world toward its own possibilities. Let us note finally the confusing syntheses which play on the nihilating ambiguity of these temporal ekstases, affirming at once that I am what I have been (the man who deliberately *arrests himself* at one period in his life and refuses to take into consideration the later changes) and that I am not what I have been (the man who in the face of reproaches or rancor dissociates himself from his past by insisting on his freedom and on his perpetual re-creation). In all these concepts, which have only a transitive role in the reasoning and which are eliminated from the conclusion, (like hypochondriacs in the calculations of physicians), we find again the same structure. We have to deal with human reality as a being which is what it is not and which is not what it is.

But what exactly is necessary in order for these concepts of disintegration to be able to receive even a pretence of existence, in order for them to be able to appear for an instant to consciousness, even in a process of evanescence? A quick examination of the idea of sincerity, the antithesis of bad faith, will be very instructive in this connection. Actually sincerity presents itself as a demand and consequently is not a state. Now what is the ideal to be attained in this case? It is necessary that a man be *for himself* only what he is. But is this not precisely the definition of the in-itself—or if you prefer—the principle of identity? To posit as an ideal the being of things, is this not to assert by the same stroke that this being does not belong to human reality and that the principle of identity, far from being a universal axiom universally applied, is only a synthetic principle enjoying a merely regional universality? Thus in order that the concepts of bad faith can put us under illusion at least for an instant, in order that the candor of “pure hearts” (cf. Gide, Kessel) can have validity for human reality as an ideal, the principle of identity must not represent a constitutive principle of human reality and human reality must not be necessarily what it is but must be able to be what it is not. What does this mean?

If man is what he is, bad faith is for ever impossible and candor ceases to be his ideal and becomes instead his being. But is man what he is? And more generally, how can he be what he is when he exists as consciousness

of being? If candor or sincerity is a universal value, it is evident that the maxim "one must be what one is" does not serve solely as a regulating principle for judgments and concepts by which I express what I am. It posits not merely an ideal of knowing but an ideal of being; it proposes for us an absolute equivalence of being with itself as a prototype of being. In this sense it is necessary that we make ourselves what we are. But what are we then if we have the constant obligation to make ourselves what we are, if our mode of being is having the obligation to be what we are?

Let us consider this waiter in the café. His movement is quick and forward, a little too precise, a little too rapid. He comes toward the patrons with a step a little too quick. He bends forward a little too eagerly; his voice, his eyes express an interest a little too solicitous for the order of the customer. Finally there he returns, trying to imitate in his walk the inflexible stiffness of some kind of automaton while carrying his tray with the recklessness of a tight-rope-walker by putting it in a perpetually unstable, perpetually broken equilibrium which he perpetually reestablishes by a light movement of the arm and hand. All his behavior seems to us a game. He applies himself to chaining his movements as if they were mechanisms, the one regulating the other; his gestures and even his voice seem to be mechanisms; he gives himself the quickness and pitiless rapidity of things. He is playing, he is amusing himself. But what is he playing? We need not watch long before we can explain it: he is playing at being a waiter in a café. There is nothing there to surprise us. The game is a kind of marking out and investigation. The child plays with his body in order to explore it, to take inventory of it; the waiter in the café plays with his condition in order to realize it. This obligation is not different from that which is imposed on all tradesmen. Their condition is wholly one of ceremony. The public demands of them that they realize it as a ceremony; there is the dance of the grocer, of the tailor, of the auctioneer, by which they endeavour to persuade their clientele that they are nothing but a grocer, an auctioneer, a tailor. A grocer who dreams is offensive to the buyer, because such a grocer is not wholly a grocer. Society demands that he limit himself to his function as a grocer, just as the soldier at attention makes himself into a soldier-thing with a direct regard which does not see at all, which is no longer meant to see, since it is the rule and not the interest of the moment which determines the point he must fix his eyes on (the sight "fixed at ten paces"). There are indeed many precautions to imprison a man in what he is, as if we lived in perpetual fear that he might escape from it, that he might break away and suddenly elude his condition.

In a parallel situation, from within, the waiter in the café can not be immediately a café waiter in the sense that this inkwell is an inkwell, or the glass is a glass. It is by no means that he can not form reflective judgments or concepts concerning his condition. He knows well what it

“means:” the obligation of getting up at five o’clock, of sweeping the floor of the shop before the restaurant opens, of starting the coffee pot going, etc. He knows the rights which it allows: the right to the tips, the right to belong to a union, etc. But all these concepts, all these judgments refer to the transcendent. It is a matter of abstract possibilities, of rights and duties conferred on a “person possessing rights.” And it is precisely this person *who I have to be* (if I am the waiter in question) and who I am not. It is not that I do not wish to be this person or that I want this person to be different. But rather there is no common measure between his being and mine. It is a “representation” for others and for myself, which means that I can be he only in representation. But if I represent myself as him, I am not he; I am separated from him as the object from the subject, separated by *nothing*, but this nothing isolates me from him. I can not be he, I can only play at *being* him; that is, imagine to myself that I am he. And thereby I affect him with nothingness. In vain do I fulfill the functions of a café waiter. I can be he only in the neutralized mode, as the actor is Hamlet, by mechanically making the typical gestures of my state and by aiming at myself as an imaginary café waiter through those gestures taken as an “analogue.”⁷ What I attempt to realize is a being-in-itself of the café waiter, as if it were not just in my power to confer their value and their urgency upon my duties and the rights of my position, as if it were not my free choice to get up each morning at five o’clock or to remain in bed, even though it meant getting fired. As if from the very fact that I sustain this role in existence I did not transcend it on every side, as if I did not constitute myself as one *beyond* my condition. Yet there is no doubt that I *am* in a sense a café waiter—otherwise could I not just as well call myself a diplomat or a reporter? But if I am one, this can not be in the mode of being-in-itself. I am a waiter in the mode of being *what I am not*.

Furthermore we are dealing with more than mere social positions; I am never any one of my attitudes, any one of my actions. The good speaker is the one who *plays* at speaking, because he can not *be* speaking. The attentive pupil who wishes to be attentive, his eyes riveted on the teacher, his ears open wide, so exhausts himself in playing the attentive role that he ends up by no longer hearing anything. Perpetually absent to my body, to my acts, I am despite myself that “divine absence” of which Valéry speaks. I can not say either that I am here or that I am not here, in the sense that we say “that box of matches is on the table;” this would be to confuse my “being-in-the-world” with a “being-in the midst of the world.” Nor that I am standing, nor that I am seated; this would be to confuse my body with the idiosyncratic totality of which it is only one of the structures. On all sides I escape being and yet—I am.

But take a mode of being which concerns only myself: I am sad. One

⁷ Cf. *L’Imaginaire*. Conclusion.

might think that surely I am the sadness in the mode of being what I am. What is the sadness, however, if not the intentional unity which comes to reassemble and animate the totality of my conduct? It is the meaning of this dull look with which I view the world, of my bowed shoulders, of my lowered head, of the listlessness in my whole body. But at the very moment when I adopt each of these attitudes, do I not know that I shall not be able to hold on to it? Let a stranger suddenly appear and I will lift up my head, I will assume a lively cheerfulness. What will remain of my sadness except that I obligingly promise it an appointment for later after the departure of the visitor? Moreover is not this sadness itself a conduct? Is it not consciousness which affects itself with sadness as a magical recourse against a situation too urgent?⁸ And in this case even, should we not say that being sad means first to make oneself sad? That may be, someone will say, but after all doesn't giving oneself the being of sadness mean to receive this being? It makes no difference from where I receive it. The fact is that a consciousness which affects itself with sadness is sad precisely for this reason. But it is difficult to comprehend the nature of consciousness; the being-sad is not a ready-made being which I give to myself as I can give this book to my friend. I do not possess the property or *affecting myself with being*. If I make myself sad, I must continue to make myself sad from beginning to end. I can not treat my sadness as an impulse finally achieved and put it on file without recreating it, nor can I carry it in the manner of an inert body which continues its movement after the initial shock. There is no inertia in consciousness. If I make myself sad, it is because I am not sad—the being of the sadness escapes me by and in the very act by which I affect myself with it. The being-in-itself of sadness perpetually haunts my consciousness (of) being sad, but it is as a value which I can not realize; it stands as a regulative meaning of my sadness, not as its constitutive modality.

Someone may say that my consciousness at least is, whatever may be the object or the state of which it makes itself consciousness. But how do we distinguish my consciousness (of) being sad from sadness? Is it not all one? It is true in a way that my consciousness is, if one means by this that for another it is a part of the totality of being on which judgments can be brought to bear. But it should be noted, as Husserl clearly understood, that my consciousness appears originally to the Other as an absence. It is the object always present as the *meaning* of all my attitudes and all my conduct—and always absent, for it gives itself to the intuition of another as a perpetual question—still better, as a perpetual freedom. When Pierre looks at me, I know of course that he is looking at me. His eyes, things in the world, are fixed on my body, a thing in the world—that is the objective fact of which I can say: it is. But it is also a fact *in the world*. The meaning

⁸ *Esquisse d'une théorie des émotions*. Hermann Paul. In English. *The Emotions. Outline of a Theory*. Philosophical Library. 1948.

of this look is not a fact in the world, and this is what makes me uncomfortable. Although I make smiles, promises, threats, nothing can get hold of the approbation, the free judgment which I seek; I know that it is always beyond. I sense it in my very attitude, which is no longer like that of the worker toward the things he uses as instruments. My reactions, to the extent that I project myself toward the Other, are no longer for myself but are rather mere presentations; they await being constituted as graceful or uncouth, sincere or insincere, etc., by an apprehension which is always beyond my efforts to provoke, an apprehension which will be provoked by my efforts only if of itself it lends them force (that is, only in so far as it causes itself to be provoked from the outside), *which is its own mediator with the transcendent*. Thus the objective fact of the being-in-itself of the consciousness of the Other is posited in order to disappear in negativity and in freedom: consciousness of the Other is as not-being; its being-in-itself "here and now" is not-to-be.

Consciousness of the Other is what it is not.

Furthermore the being of my own consciousness does not appear to me as the consciousness of the Other. It is because it makes itself, since its being is consciousness of being. But this means that making sustains being; consciousness has to be its own being, it is never sustained by being; it sustains being in the heart of subjectivity, which means once again that it is inhabited by being but that it is not being: consciousness is not what it is.

Under these conditions what can be the significance of the ideal of sincerity except as a task impossible to achieve, of which the very meaning is in contradiction with the structure of my consciousness. To be sincere, we said, is to be what one is. That supposes that I am not originally what I am. But here naturally Kant's "You ought, therefore you can" is implicitly understood. I can become sincere; this is what my duty and my effort to achieve sincerity imply. But we definitely establish that the original structure of "not being what one is" renders impossible in advance all movement toward being in itself or "being what one is." And this impossibility is not hidden from consciousness; on the contrary, it is the very stuff of consciousness; it is the embarrassing constraint which we constantly experience; it is our very incapacity to recognize ourselves, to constitute ourselves as being what we are. It is this necessity which means that, as soon as we posit ourselves as a certain being, by a legitimate judgment, based on inner experience or correctly deduced from a priori or empirical premises, then by that very positing we surpass this being—and that not toward another being but toward emptiness, toward *nothing*.

How then can we blame another for not being sincere or rejoice in our own sincerity since this sincerity appears to us at the same time to be impossible? How can we in conversation, in confession, in introspection, even attempt sincerity since the effort will by its very nature be doomed

to failure and since at the very time when we announce it we have a pre-judicative comprehension of its futility? In introspection I try to determine exactly what I am, to make up my mind to be my true self without delay—even though it means consequently to set about searching for ways to change myself. But what does this mean if not that I am constituting myself as a thing? Shall I determine the ensemble of purposes and motivations which have pushed me to do this or that action? But this is already to postulate a causal determinism which constitutes the flow of my states of consciousness as a succession of physical states. Shall I uncover in myself “drives,” even though it be to affirm them in shame? But is this not deliberately to forget that these drives are realized with my consent, that they are not forces of nature but that I lend them their efficacy by a perpetually renewed decision concerning their value. Shall I pass judgment on my character, on my nature? Is this not to veil from myself at that moment what I know only too well, that I thus judge a past to which by definition my present is not subject? The proof of this is that the same man who in sincerity posits that he is what in actuality he was, is indignant at the reproach of another and tries to disarm it by asserting that he can no longer be what he was. We are readily astonished and upset when the penalties of the court affect a man who in his new freedom is no longer the guilty person he was. But at the same time we require of this man that he recognize himself as being this guilty one. What then is sincerity except precisely a phenomenon of bad faith? Have we not shown indeed that in bad faith human reality is constituted as a being which is what it is not and which is not what it is?

Let us take an example: A homosexual frequently has an intolerable feeling of guilt, and his whole existence is determined in relation to this feeling. One will readily foresee that he is in bad faith. In fact it frequently happens that this man, while recognizing his homosexual inclination, while avowing each and every particular misdeed which he has committed, refuses with all his strength to consider himself “a *paederast*.” His case is always “different,” peculiar; there enters into it something of a game, of chance, of bad luck; the mistakes are all in the past; they are explained by a certain conception of the beautiful which women can not satisfy; we should see in them the results of a restless search, rather than the manifestations of a deeply rooted tendency, etc., etc. Here is assuredly a man in bad faith who borders on the comic since, acknowledging all the facts which are imputed to him, he refuses to draw from them the conclusion which they impose. His friend, who is his most severe critic, becomes irritated with this duplicity. The critic asks only one thing—and perhaps then he will show himself indulgent: that the guilty one recognize himself as guilty, that the homosexual declare frankly—whether humbly or boastfully matters little—“I am a *paederast*.” We ask here: Who is in bad faith? The homosexual or the champion of sincerity?

The homosexual recognizes his faults, but he struggles with all his strength against the crushing view that his mistakes constitute for him a *destiny*. He does not wish to let himself be considered as a thing. He has an obscure but strong feeling that an homosexual is not an homosexual as this table is a table or as this red-haired man is red-haired. It seems to him that he has escaped from each mistake as soon as he has posited it and recognized it; he even feels that the psychic duration by itself cleanses him from each misdeed, constitutes for him an undetermined future, causes him to be born anew. Is he wrong? Does he not recognize in himself the peculiar, irreducible character of human reality? His attitude includes then an undeniable comprehension of truth. But at the same time he needs this perpetual rebirth, this constant escape in order to live; he must constantly put himself beyond reach in order to avoid the terrible judgment of collectivity. Thus he plays on the word *being*. He would be right actually if he understood the phrase, "I am not a paederast" in the sense of "I am not what I am." That is, if he declared to himself, "To the extent that a pattern of conduct is defined as the conduct of a paederast and to the extent that I have adopted this conduct, I am a paederast. But to the extent that human reality can not be finally defined by patterns of conduct, I am not one." But instead he slides surreptitiously towards a different connotation of the word "being." He understands "not being" in the sense of "not-being-in-itself." He lays claim to "not being a paederast" in the sense in which this table is not an inkwell. He is in bad faith.

But the champion of sincerity is not ignorant of the transcendence of human reality, and he knows how at need to appeal to it for his own advantage. He makes use of it even and brings it up in the present argument. Does he not wish, first in the name of sincerity, then of freedom, that the homosexual reflect on himself and acknowledge himself as an homosexual? Does he not let the other understand that such a confession will win indulgence for him? What does this mean if not that the man who will acknowledge himself as an homosexual will no longer be the same as the homosexual whom he acknowledges being and that he will escape into the region of freedom and of good will? The critic asks the man then to be what he is in order no longer to be what he is. It is the profound meaning of the saying, "A sin confessed is half pardoned." The critic demands of the guilty one that he constitute himself as a thing, precisely in order no longer to treat him as a thing. And this contradiction is constitutive of the demand of sincerity. Who can not see how offensive to the Other and how reassuring for me is a statement such as, "He's just a paederast," which removes a disturbing freedom from a trait and which aims at henceforth constituting all the acts of the Other as consequences following strictly from his essence. That is actually what the critic is demanding of his victim—that he constitute himself as a thing, that he should entrust his freedom to his friend as a fief, in order that

the friend should return it to him subsequently—like a suzerain to his vassal. The champion of sincerity is in bad faith to the degree that in order to reassure himself, he pretends to judge, to the extent that he demands that freedom as freedom constitute itself as a thing. We have here only one episode in that battle to the death of consciousness which Hegel calls “the relation of the master and the slave.” A person appeals to another and demands that in the name of his nature as consciousness he should radically destroy himself as consciousness, but while making this appeal he leads the other to hope for a rebirth beyond this destruction.

Very well, someone will say, but our man is abusing sincerity, playing one side against the other. We should not look for sincerity in the relation of the *Mit-sein* but rather where it is pure—in the relations of a person with himself. But who can not see that objective sincerity is constituted in the same way? Who can not see that the sincere man constitutes himself as a thing in order to escape the condition of a thing by the same act of sincerity? The man who confesses that he is evil has exchanged his disturbing “freedom-for-evil” for an inanimate character of evil; he is evil, he clings to himself, he is what he is. But by the same stroke, he escapes from that *thing*, since it is he who contemplates it, since it depends on him to maintain it under his glance or to let it collapse in an infinity of particular acts. He derives a merit from his sincerity, and the deserving man is not the evil man as he is evil but as he is beyond his evilness. At the same time the evil is disarmed since it is nothing, save on the plane of determinism, and since in confessing it, I posit my freedom in respect to it; my future is virgin; everything is allowed to me.

Thus the essential structure of sincerity does not differ from that of bad faith since the sincere man constitutes himself as what he is in order not to be it. This explains the truth recognized by all that one can fall into bad faith through being sincere. As Valéry pointed out, this is the case with Stendhal. Total, constant sincerity as a constant effort to adhere to oneself is by nature a constant effort to dissociate oneself from oneself. A person frees himself from himself by the very act by which he makes himself an object for himself. To draw up a perpetual inventory of what one is means constantly to deny oneself and to take refuge in a sphere where one is no longer anything but a pure, free regard. The goal of bad faith, as we said, is to put oneself out of reach; it is an escape. Now we see that we must use the same terms to define sincerity. What does this mean?

In the final analysis the goal of sincerity and the goal of bad faith are not so different. To be sure, there is a sincerity which bears on the past and which does not concern us here; I am sincere if I confess *having had* this pleasure or that intention. We shall see that if this sincerity is possible, it is because in his fall into the past, the being of man is constituted as a being-in-itself. But here our concern is only with the sincerity which aims at itself in present immanence. What is its goal? To bring me to confess

to myself what I am in order that I may finally coincide with my being; in a word, to cause myself to be, in the mode of the in-itself, what I am in the mode of "not being what I am." Its assumption is that fundamentally I am already, in the mode of the in-itself, what I have to be. Thus we find at the base of sincerity a continual game of mirror and reflection, a perpetual passage from the being which is what it is, to the being which is not what it is and inversely from the being which is not what it is to the being which is what it is. And what is the goal of bad faith? To cause me to be what I am, in the mode of "not being what one is," or not to be what I am in the mode of "being what one is." We find here the same game of mirrors. In fact in order for me to have an intention of sincerity, I must at the outset simultaneously be and not be what I am. Sincerity does not assign to me a mode of being or a particular quality, but in relation to that quality it aims at making me pass from one mode of being to another mode of being. This second mode of being, the ideal of sincerity, I am prevented by nature from attaining; and at the very moment when I struggle to attain it, I have a vague prejudicative comprehension that I shall not attain it. But all the same, in order for me to be able to conceive an intention in bad faith, I must have such a nature that within my being I escape from my being. If I were sad or cowardly in the way in which this inkwell is an inkwell, the possibility of bad faith could not even be conceived. Not only should I be unable to escape from my being; I could not even imagine that I could escape from it. But if bad faith is possible by virtue of a simple project, it is because so far as my being is concerned, there is no difference between being and non-being if I am cut off from my project.

Bad faith is possible only because sincerity is conscious of missing its goal inevitably, due to its very nature. I can try to apprehend myself as "not being cowardly," when I am so, only on condition that the "being cowardly" is itself "in question" at the very moment when it exists, on condition that it is itself one question, that at the very moment when I wish to apprehend it, it escapes me on all sides and annihilates itself. The condition under which I can attempt an effort in bad faith is that in one sense, I am not this coward which I do not wish to be. But if I were not cowardly in the simple mode of not-being-what-one-is-not, I would be "in good faith" by declaring that I am not cowardly. Thus this inapprehensible coward is evanescent; in order for me not to be cowardly, I must in some way also be cowardly. That does not mean that I must be "a little" cowardly, in the sense that "a little" signifies "to a certain degree cowardly—and not cowardly to a certain degree." No. I must at once both be and not be totally and in all respects a coward. Thus in this case bad faith requires that I should not be what I am; that is, that there be an imponderable difference separating being from non-being in the mode of being of human reality.

But bad faith is not restricted to denying the qualities which I possess,

to not seeing the being which I am. It attempts also to constitute myself as being what I am not. It apprehends me positively as courageous when I am not so. And that is possible, once again, only if I am what I am not; that is, if non-being in me does not have being even as non-being. Of course necessarily I am not courageous; otherwise bad faith would not be bad faith. But in addition my effort in bad faith must include the ontological comprehension that even in my usual being what I am, I am not it really and that there is no such difference between the being of "being-sad," for example—which I am in the mode of not being what I am—and the "non-being" of not-being-courageous which I wish to hide from myself. Moreover it is particularly requisite that the very negation of being should be itself the object of a perpetual nihilation, that the very meaning of "non-being" be perpetually in question in human reality. If I were not courageous in the way in which this inkwell is not a table; that is, if I were isolated in my cowardice, propped firmly against it, incapable of putting it in relation to its opposite, if I were not capable of determining myself as cowardly—that is, to deny courage to myself and thereby to escape my cowardice in the very moment that I posit it—if it were not on principle impossible for me to coincide with my not-being-courageous as well as with my being-courageous—then any project of bad faith would be prohibited me. Thus in order for bad faith to be possible, sincerity itself must be in bad faith. The condition of the possibility for bad faith is that human reality, in its most immediate being, in the intra-structure of the pre-reflective *cogito*, must be what it is not and not be what it is.

III. THE "FAITH" OF BAD FAITH

WE have indicated for the moment only those conditions which render bad faith conceivable, the structures of being which permit us to form concepts of bad faith. We can not limit ourselves to these considerations; we have not yet distinguished bad faith from falsehood. The two-faced concepts which we have described would without a doubt be utilized by a liar to discountenance his questioner, although their two-faced quality being established on the being of man and not on some empirical circumstance, can and ought to be evident to all. The true problem of bad faith stems evidently from the fact that bad faith is *faith*. It can not be either a cynical lie or certainty—if certainty is the intuitive possession of the object. But if we take belief as meaning the adherence of being to its object when the object is not given or is given indistinctly, then bad faith is belief; and the essential problem of bad faith is a problem of belief.

How can we believe by bad faith in the concepts which we forge expressly to persuade ourselves? We must note in fact that the project of

bad faith must be itself in bad faith. I am not only in bad faith at the end of my effort when I have constructed my two-faced concepts and when I have persuaded myself. In truth, I have not persuaded myself; to the extent that I could be so persuaded, I have always been so. And at the very moment when I was disposed to put myself in bad faith, I of necessity was in bad faith with respect to this same disposition. For me to have represented it to myself as bad faith would have been cynicism; to believe it sincerely innocent would have been in good faith. The decision to be in bad faith does not dare to speak its name; it believes itself and does not believe itself in bad faith; it believes itself and does not believe itself in good faith. It is this which from the upsurge of bad faith, determines the later attitude and, as it were, the *Weltanschauung* of bad faith.

Bad faith does not hold the norms and criteria of truth as they are accepted by the critical thought of good faith. What it decides first, in fact, is the nature of truth. With bad faith a truth appears, a method of thinking, a type of being which is like that of objects; the ontological characteristic of the world of bad faith with which the subject suddenly surrounds himself is this: that here being is what it is not, and is not what it is. Consequently a peculiar type of evidence appears; non-persuasive evidence. Bad faith apprehends evidence but it is resigned in advance to not being fulfilled by this evidence, to not being persuaded and transformed into good faith. It makes itself humble and modest; it is not ignorant, it says, that faith is decision and that after each intuition, it must decide and *will* what it is. Thus bad faith in its primitive project and in its coming into the world decides on the exact nature of its requirements. It stands forth in the firm resolution *not to demand too much*, to count itself satisfied when it is barely persuaded, to force itself in decisions to adhere to uncertain truths. This original project of bad faith is a decision in bad faith on the nature of faith. Let us understand clearly that there is no question of a reflective, voluntary decision, but of a spontaneous determination of our being. One puts oneself in bad faith as one goes to sleep and one is in bad faith as one dreams. Once this mode of being has been realized, it is as difficult to get out of it as to wake oneself up; bad faith is a type of being in the world, like waking or dreaming, which by itself tends to perpetuate itself, although its structure is of the *metastable* type. But bad faith is conscious of its structure, and it has taken precautions by deciding that the metastable structure is the structure of being and that non-persuasion is the structure of all convictions. It follows that if bad faith is faith and if it includes in its original project its own negation (it determines itself to be not quite convinced in order to convince itself that I am what I am not), then to start with, a faith which wishes itself to be not quite convinced must be possible. What are the conditions for the possibility of such a faith?

I believe that my friend Pierre feels friendship for me. I believe it in

good faith. I believe it but I do not have for it any self-evident intuition, for the nature of the object does not lend itself to intuition. I believe it; that is, I allow myself to give in to all impulses to trust it; I decide to believe in it, and to maintain myself in this decision; I conduct myself, finally, as if I were certain of it—and all this in the synthetic unity of one and the same attitude. This which I define as good faith is what Hegel would call the *immediate*. It is simple faith. Hegel would demonstrate at once that the immediate calls for mediation and that belief by becoming belief for itself, passes to the state of non-belief. If I believe that my friend Pierre likes me, this means that his friendship appears to me as the meaning of all his acts. Belief is a particular consciousness of the meaning of Pierre's acts. But if I know that I believe, the belief appears to me as pure subjective determination without external correlative. This is what makes the very word "to believe" a term utilized indifferently to indicate the unwavering firmness of belief ("My God, I believe in you") and its character as disarmed and strictly subjective. ("Is Pierre my friend? I do not know; I believe so.") But the nature of consciousness is such that in it the mediate and the immediate are one and the same being. To believe is to know that one believes, and to know that one believes is no longer to believe. Thus to believe is not to believe any longer because that is only to believe—this in the unity of one and the same non-thetic self-consciousness. To be sure, we have here forced the description of the phenomenon by designating it with the word to know; non-thetic consciousness is not to know. But it is in its very translucency at the origin of all knowing. Thus the non-thetic consciousness (of) believing is destructive of belief. But at the same time the very law of the pre-reflective *cogito* implies that the being of believing ought to be the consciousness of believing.

Thus belief is a being which questions its own being, which can realize itself only in its destruction, which can manifest itself to itself only by denying itself. It is a being for which to be is to appear and to appear is to deny itself. To believe is not-to-believe. We see the reason for it; the being of consciousness is to exist by itself, then to make itself be and thereby to pass beyond itself. In this sense consciousness is perpetually escaping itself, belief becomes non-belief, the immediate becomes mediation, the absolute becomes relative, and the relative becomes absolute. The ideal of good faith (to believe what one believes) is, like that of sincerity (to be what one is), an ideal of being-in-itself. Every belief is a belief that falls short; one never wholly believes what one believes. Consequently the primitive project of bad faith is only the utilization of this self-destruction of the fact of consciousness. If every belief in good faith is an impossible belief, then there is a place for every impossible belief. My inability to believe that I am courageous will not discourage me since every belief involves not quite believing. I shall define this impossible belief as my belief. To be sure, I shall not be able to hide from myself that I believe

in order not to believe and that I do not believe in order to believe. But the subtle, total annihilation of bad faith by itself can not surprise me; it exists at the basis of all faith. What is it then? At the moment when I wish to believe myself courageous I know that I am a coward. And this certainly would come to destroy my belief. But *first*, I am not any more courageous than cowardly, if we are to understand this in the mode of being of the-in-itself. In the second place, I do not know that I am courageous; such a view of myself can be accompanied only by *belief*, for it surpasses pure reflective certitude. In the third place, it is very true that bad faith does not succeed in believing what it wishes to believe. But it is precisely as the acceptance of not believing what it believes that it is bad faith. Good faith wishes to flee the "not-believing-what-one-believes" by finding refuge in being. Bad faith flees being by taking refuge in "not-believing-what-one-believes." It has disarmed all beliefs in advance—those which it would like to take hold of and, by the same stroke, the others, those which it wishes to flee. In *willing* this self-destruction of belief, from which science escapes by searching for evidence, it ruins the beliefs which are opposed to it, which reveal themselves as *being only* belief. Thus we can better understand the original phenomenon of bad faith.

In bad faith there is no cynical lie nor knowing preparation for deceitful concepts. But the first act of bad faith is to flee what it can not flee, to flee what it is. The very project of flight reveals to bad faith an inner disintegration in the heart of being, and it is this disintegration which bad faith wishes to be. In truth, the two immediate attitudes which we can take in the face of our being are conditioned by the very nature of this being and its immediate relation with the in-itself. Good faith seeks to flee the inner disintegration of my being in the direction of the in-itself which it should be and is not. Bad faith seeks to flee the in-itself by means of the inner disintegration of my being. But it denies this very disintegration as it denies that it is itself bad faith. Bad faith seeks by means of "not-being-what-one-is" to escape from the in-itself which I am not in the mode of being what one is not. It denies itself as bad faith and aims at the in-itself which I am not in the mode of "not-being-what-one-is-not."⁹ If bad faith is possible, it is because it is an immediate, permanent threat to every project of the human being; it is because consciousness conceals in its being a permanent risk of bad faith. The origin of this risk is the fact that the nature of consciousness simultaneously is to be what it is not and not to be what it is. In the light of these remarks we can now approach the ontological study of consciousness, not as the totality of the human being, but as the instantaneous nucleus of this being.

⁹ If it is indifferent whether one is in good or in bad faith, because bad faith reapprehends good faith and slides to the very origin of the project of good faith, that does not mean that we can not radically escape bad faith. But this supposes a self-recovery of being which was previously corrupted. This self-recovery we shall call authenticity, the description of which has no place here.

PART TWO

Being-for-Itself

CHAPTER ONE

Immediate Structures of the For-Itself

I. PRESENCE TO SELF

NEGATION has referred us to freedom, freedom to bad faith, and bad faith to the being of consciousness, which is the requisite condition for the possibility of bad faith. In the light of the requirements which we have established in the preceding chapters, we must now resume the description which we attempted in the Introduction of this work; that is, we must return to the plane of the pre-reflective *cogito*. Now the *cogito* never gives out anything other than what we ask of it. Descartes questioned it concerning its functional aspect—"I doubt, I think." And because he wished to pass without a conducting thread from this functional aspect to existential dialectic, he fell into the error of substance. Husserl, warned by this error, remained timidly on the plane of functional description. Due to this fact he never passed beyond the pure description of the appearance as such; he has shut himself up inside the *cogito* and deserves—in spite of his denial—to be called a phenomenalist rather than a phenomenologist. His phenomenism at every moment borders on Kantian idealism. Heidegger, wishing to avoid that descriptive phenomenism which leads to the Megarian, antidialectic isolation of essences, begins with the existential analytic without going through the *cogito*. But since the *Dasein* has from the start been deprived of the dimension of consciousness, it can never regain this dimension. Heidegger endows human reality with a self-understanding which he defines as an "ekstatic project" of its own possibilities. It is certainly not my intention to deny the existence of this project. But how could there be an understanding which would not in itself be the consciousness (of) being understanding? This ekstatic character of human reality will lapse into a thing-like, blind in-itself unless it arises from the consciousness of ekstasis. In truth the *cogito* must be

our point of departure, but we can say of it, parodying a famous saying, that it leads us only on condition that we get out of it. Our preceding study, which concerned the conditions for the possibility of certain types of conduct, had as its goal only to place us in a position to question the cogito about its being and to furnish us with the dialectic instrument which would enable us to find in the cogito itself the means of escaping from instantaneity toward the totality of being which constitutes human reality. Let us return now to description of non-thetic self-consciousness; let us examine its results and ask what it means for consciousness that it must necessarily be what it is not and not be what it is.

"The being of consciousness," we said in the Introduction, "is a being such that in its being, its being is in question." This means that the being of consciousness does not coincide with itself in a full equivalence. Such equivalence, which is that of the in-itself, is expressed by this simple formula: being is what it is. In the in-itself there is not a particle of being which is not wholly within itself without distance. When being is thus conceived there is not the slightest suspicion of duality in it; this is what we mean when we say that the density of being of the in-itself is infinite. It is a fullness. The principle of identity can be said to be synthetic not only because it limits its scope to a region of definite being, but in particular because it masses within it the infinity of density. "A is A" means that A exists in an infinite compression with an infinite density. Identity is the limiting concept of unification: it is not true that the in-itself has any need of a synthetic unification of its being; at its own extreme limit, unity disappears and passes into identity. Identity is the ideal of "one," and "one" comes into the world by human reality. The in-itself is full of itself, and no more total plenitude can be imagined, no more perfect equivalence of content to container. There is not the slightest emptiness in being, not the tiniest crack through which nothingness might slip in.

The distinguishing characteristic of consciousness, on the other hand, is that it is a decompression of being. Indeed it is impossible to define it as coincidence with itself. Of this table I can say only that it is purely and simply *this* table. But I can not limit myself to saying that my belief is belief; my belief is the consciousness (of) belief. It is often said that the act of reflection alters the fact of consciousness on which it is directed. Husserl himself admits that the fact "of being seen" involves a total modification for each *Erlebnis*. But I believe that I have demonstrated that the first condition of all reflection is a pre-reflective cogito. This cogito, to be sure, does not posit an object; it remains within consciousness. But it is nonetheless homologous with the reflective cogito since it appears as the first necessity for non-reflective consciousness to be seen by itself. Originally then the cogito includes this nullifying characteristic of existing for a witness, although the witness for which consciousness exists is itself. Thus by the sole fact that my belief is apprehended as belief, it is *no*

longer only belief; that is, it is already no longer belief, it is troubled belief. Thus the ontological judgment "belief is consciousness (of) belief" can under no circumstances be taken as a statement of identity; the subject and the attribute are radically different though still within the indissoluble unity of one and the same being.

Very well, someone will say, but at least we must say that consciousness (of) belief is consciousness (of) belief. We rediscover identity and the in-itself on this level. It was only a matter of choosing the appropriate plane on which we should apprehend our object. But that is not true: to affirm that the consciousness (of) belief is consciousness (of) belief is to dissociate consciousness from belief, to suppress the parenthesis, and to make belief an object for consciousness; it is to launch abruptly on to the plane of reflectivity. A consciousness (of) belief which would be only consciousness (of) belief would in fact have to assume consciousness (of) itself as consciousness (of) belief. Belief would become a pure transcending and noematic qualification of consciousness; consciousness would be free to determine itself as it pleased in the face of that belief. It would resemble that impassive regard which, according to Victor Cousin, consciousness casts on psychic phenomena in order to elucidate them one by one. But the analysis of methodical doubt which Husserl attempted has clearly shown the fact that only reflective consciousness can be dissociated from what is posited by the consciousness reflected-on. It is on the reflective level only that we can attempt an *εποχή*,¹ a putting between parentheses, only there that we can refuse what Husserl calls the *mitmachen*.² The consciousness (of) belief, while irreparably altering belief, does not distinguish itself from belief; it exists in order to perform the act of faith. Thus we are obliged to admit that the consciousness (of) belief is belief. At its origin we have apprehended this double game of reference: consciousness (of) belief is belief and belief is consciousness (of) belief. On no account can we say that consciousness is consciousness or that belief is belief. Each of the terms refers to the other and passes into the other, and yet each term is different from the other. We have seen that neither belief nor pleasure nor joy can exist before being conscious; consciousness is the measure of their being; yet it is no less true that belief, owing to the very fact that it can exist only as troubled, exists from the start as escaping itself, as shattering the unity of all the concepts in which one can wish to inclose it.

Thus consciousness (of) belief and belief are one and the same being, the characteristic of which is absolute immanence. But as soon as we wish to grasp this being, it slips between our fingers, and we find ourselves faced with a pattern of duality, with a game of reflections. For conscious-

¹ Correction for *επόχη*, an obvious misprint. Tr.

² "To take part in," "to participate." Tr.

ness is a reflection (*reflet*), but qua reflection it is exactly the one reflecting (*réfléchissant*), and if we attempt to grasp it as reflecting, it vanishes and we fall back on the reflection. This structure of the reflection—reflecting (*reflet-reflétant*) has disconcerted philosophers, who have wanted to explain it by an appeal to infinity—either by positing it as an *idea-ideae* as Spinoza did, who calls it an *idea-ideae-ideae*, etc., or by defining it in the manner of Hegel as a return upon itself, as the veritable infinite. But the introduction of infinity into consciousness, aside from the fact that it fixes the phenomenon and obscures it, is only an explicative theory expressly designed to reduce the being of consciousness to that of the in-itself. Yet if we accept the objective existence of the reflection—reflecting as it is given, we are obliged to conceive a mode of being different from that of the in-itself, not a unity which contains a duality, not a synthesis which surpasses and lifts the abstract moments of the thesis and of the antithesis, but a duality which is unity, a reflection (*reflet*) which is its own reflecting (*reflection*). In fact if we seek to lay hold on the total phenomenon (i.e., the unity of this duality or consciousness (of) belief), we are referred immediately to one of the terms, and this term in turn refers us to the unitary organization of immanence. But if on the contrary we wish to take our point of departure from duality as such and to posit consciousness and belief as a dyad, then we encounter the *idea-ideae* of Spinoza and we miss the pre-reflective phenomenon which we wished to study. This is because pre-reflective consciousness is self-consciousness. It is this same notion of self which must be studied, for it defines the very being of consciousness.

Let us note first that the term in-itself, which we have borrowed from tradition to designate the transcending being, is inaccurate. At the limit of coincidence with itself, in fact, the self vanishes to give place to identical being. The self can not be a property of being-in-itself. By nature it is a reflexive, as syntax sufficiently indicates—in particular the logical rigor of Latin syntax with the strict distinctions imposed by grammar between the uses of *ejus* and *sui*. The self refers, but it refers precisely to the subject. It indicates a relation between the subject and himself, and this relation is precisely a duality, but a particular duality since it requires particular verbal symbols. But on the other hand, the self does not designate being either as subject or as predicate. If indeed I consider the “se” in “*il s’ennuie*,”³ for example, I establish that it opens up to allow the subject himself to appear behind it. It is not the subject, since the subject without relation to himself would be condensed into the identity of the in-itself; neither is it a consistent articulation of the real, since it allows the subject to appear behind it. In fact the self cannot be apprehended as a real existent; the subject can not be self, for coincidence with self, as we have seen, causes the self to disappear. But neither can it not be itself

³ Literally the “self” in “he bores himself” (*il s’ennuie*), a familiar construction in the many French reflexive verbs. Cf. English “he washes himself.” Tr.

since the self is an indication of the subject himself. The *self* therefore represents an ideal distance within the immanence of the subject in relation to himself, a way of not being his own coincidence, of escaping identity while positing it as unity—in short, of being in a perpetually unstable equilibrium between identity as absolute cohesion without a trace of diversity and unity as a synthesis of a multiplicity. This is what we shall call presence to itself. The law of being of the *for-itself*, as the ontological foundation of consciousness, is to be itself in the form of presence to itself.

This presence to itself has often been taken for a plenitude of existence, and a strong prejudice prevalent among philosophers causes them to attribute to consciousness the highest rank in being. But this postulate can not be maintained after a more thorough description of the notion of presence. Actually presence to always implies duality, at least a virtual separation. The presence of being to itself implies a detachment on the part of being in relation to itself. The coincidence of identity is the veritable plenitude of being exactly because in this coincidence there is left no place for any negativity. Of course the principle of identity can involve the principle of noncontradiction as Hegel has observed. The being which is what it is must be able to be the being which is not what it is not. But in the first place this negation, like all others, comes to the surface of being through human reality, as we have shown, and not through a dialectic appropriate just to being. In addition this principle can denote only the relations of being with the external, exactly because it presides over the relations of being with what it is not. We are dealing then with a principle constitutive of external relations such that they can appear to a human reality present to being-in-itself and engaged in the world. This principle does not concern the internal relations of being; these relations, inasmuch as they would posit an otherness, do not exist. The principle of identity is the negation of every species of relation at the heart of being-in-itself.

Presence to self, on the contrary, supposes that an impalpable fissure has slipped into being. If being is present to itself, it is because it is not wholly itself. Presence is an immediate deterioration of coincidence, for it supposes separation. But if we ask ourselves at this point *what it is* which separates the subject from himself, we are forced to admit that it is *nothing*. Ordinarily what separates is a distance in space, a lapse of time, a psychological difference, or simply the individuality of two co-presents—in short, a *qualified* reality. But in the case which concerns us, *nothing* can separate the consciousness (of) belief from belief, since belief is *nothing* other than the consciousness (of) belief. To introduce into the unity of a pre-reflective cogito a qualified element external to this cogito would be to shatter its unity, to destroy its translucency; there would then be in consciousness something of which it would not be conscious and which would

not exist in itself as consciousness. The separation which separates belief from itself can not be grasped or even conceived in isolation. If we seek to reveal it, it vanishes. We find belief once more as pure immanence. But if, on the other hand, we wish to apprehend belief as such, then the fissure is there, appearing when we do not wish to see it, disappearing as soon as we seek to contemplate it. This fissure then is the pure negative. Distance, lapse of time, psychological difference can be apprehended in themselves and include as such elements of positivity; they have a simple negative function. But the fissure within consciousness is a nothing except for the fact that it denies and that it can have being only as we do not see it.

This negative which is the nothingness of being and the nihilating power both together, is *nothingness*. Nowhere else can we grasp it in such purity. Everywhere else in one way or another we must confer on it being-in-itself as nothingness. But the nothingness which arises in the heart of consciousness is *not*. It is *made-to-be*. Belief, for example, is not the contiguity of one being with another being; it is its own presence to itself, its own decompression of being. Otherwise the unity of the for-itself would dissolve into the duality of two in-itselfs.⁴ Thus the for-itself must be its own nothingness. The being of consciousness qua consciousness is to exist at a distance from itself as a presence to itself, and this empty distance which being carries in its being is Nothingness. Thus in order for a self to exist, it is necessary that the unity of this being include its own nothingness as the nihilation of identity. For the nothingness which slips into belief is its nothingness, the nothingness of belief as belief in itself, as belief blind and full, as "simple faith." The for-itself is the being which determines itself to exist inasmuch as it can not coincide with itself.

Hence we understand how it was that by questioning the pre-reflective cogito without any conducting thread, we could not find nothingness anywhere. One does not *find*, one does not *disclose* nothingness in the manner in which one can find, disclose a being. Nothingness is always an *elsewhere*. It is the obligation for the for-itself never to exist except in the form of an elsewhere in relation to itself, to exist as a being which perpetually effects in itself a break in being. This break does not refer us elsewhere to another being; it is only a perpetual reference of self to self, of the reflection to the reflecting, of the reflecting to the reflection. This reference, however, does not provoke an infinite movement in the heart of the for-itself but is given within the unity of a single act. The infinite movement belongs only to the reflective regard which wants to apprehend the phenomenon as a totality and which is referred from the reflection to the reflecting, from the reflecting to the reflection without being able to stop. Thus nothingness

⁴ *Deux en-soi*. Ungrammatical as the expression "in-itselfs" admittedly is, it seems to me the most accurate translation. "In-themselves" would have a different meaning, for it would suggest a unity of two examples of being-in-itself, and Sartre's point here is their duality and isolation from each other. Tr.

ingness is this hole of being, this fall of the in-itself toward the self, the fall by which the for-itself is constituted. But this nothingness can only "be made-to-be" if its borrowed existence is correlative with a nihilating act on the part of being. This perpetual act by which the in-itself degenerates into presence to itself we shall call an ontological act. Nothingness is the putting into question of being by being—that is, precisely consciousness or for-self. It is an absolute event which comes to being by means of being and which without having being, is perpetually sustained by being. Since being-in-itself is isolated in its being by its total positivity no being can produce being and nothing can happen to being through being—except for nothingness. Nothingness is the peculiar possibility of being and its unique possibility. Yet this original possibility appears only in the absolute act which realizes it. Since nothingness is nothingness of being, it can come to being only through being itself. Of course it comes to being through a particular being, which is human reality. But this being is constituted as human reality inasmuch as this being is nothing but the original project of its own nothingness. Human reality is being in so far as within its being and for its being it is the unique foundation of nothingness at the heart of being.

II. THE FACTICITY OF THE FOR-ITSELF

YET the for-itself is. It is, we may say, even if it is a being which is not what it is and which is what it is not. It is since whatever reefs there may be to cause it to founder, still the project of sincerity is at least conceivable. The for-itself is, in the manner of an event, in the sense in which I can say that Philip II has been, that my friend Pierre is or exists. The for-itself is, in so far as it appears in a condition which it has not chosen, as Pierre is a French bourgeois in 1942, as Schmitt was a Berlin worker in 1870; it is in so far as it is thrown into a world and abandoned in a "situation;" it is as pure contingency inasmuch as for it as for things in the world, as for this wall, this tree, this cup, the original question can be posited: "Why is this being exactly such and not otherwise?" It is in so far as there is in it something of which it is not the foundation—its presence to the world.

Being apprehends itself as not being its own foundation, and this apprehension is at the basis of every *cogito*. In this connection it is to be noted that it reveals itself immediately to the *reflective cogito* of Descartes. When Descartes wants to profit from this revelation, he apprehends himself as an imperfect being "since he doubts." But in this imperfect being, he establishes the presence of the idea of perfection. He apprehends then a cleavage between the type of being which he can conceive and the being which he is. It is this cleavage or lack of being which

is at the origin of the second proof of the existence of God. In fact if we get rid of the scholastic terminology, what remains of this proof? The very clear indication that the being which possesses in itself the idea of perfection can not be its own foundation, for if it were, it would have produced itself in conformance with that idea. In other words, a being which would be its own foundation could not suffer the slightest discrepancy between what it is and what it conceives, for it would produce itself in conformance with its comprehension of being and could conceive only of what it is.

But this apprehension of being as a lack of being in the face of being is first a comprehension on the part of the cogito of its own contingency. I think, therefore I am. What am I? A being which is not its own foundation, which qua being, could be other than it is to the extent that it does not account for its being. This is that first intuition of our own contingency which Heidegger gives as the first motivation for the passage from the un-authentic to the authentic.⁵ There is restlessness, an appeal to the conscience (*Ruf des Gewissens*), a feeling of guilt. In truth Heidegger's description shows all too clearly his anxiety to establish an ontological foundation for an Ethics with which he claims not to be concerned, as also to reconcile his humanism with the religious sense of the transcendent. The intuition of our contingency is not identical with a feeling of guilt. Nevertheless it is true that in our own apprehension of ourselves, we appear to ourselves as having the character of an unjustifiable fact.

Earlier, however, we apprehended ourselves as consciousness—that is, as a “being which exists by itself.”⁶ How within the unity of one and the same upsurge into being, can we be that being which exists by itself as not being the foundation of its being? Or in other words, since the for-itself—in so far as it is—is not its own being (i.e., is not the foundation of it), how can it as for-itself, be the foundation of its own nothingness? The answer is in the question.

While being is indeed the foundation of nothingness as the nihilation of its own being, that is not the same as saying that it is the foundation of its being. To found its own being it would have to exist at a distance from itself, and that would imply a certain nihilation of the being founded as of the being which founds—a duality which would be unity; here we should fall back into the case of the for-itself. In short, every effort to conceive of the idea of a being which would be the foundation of its being results inevitably in forming that of a being which contingently as being-in-itself, would be the foundation of its own nothingness. The act of causation by which God is *causa sui* is a nihilating act like every recovery of the self by the self, to the same degree that the original re-

⁵ I have corrected what must surely be a misprint. “From the authentic to the authentic,” as the text actually reads, would make no sense. Tr.

⁶ Cf. *Introduction*, section III.

lation of necessity is a return to *self*, a reflexivity. This original necessity in turn appears on the foundation of a contingent being, precisely that being which is in order to be the cause of itself. Leibniz' effort to define necessity in terms of possibility—a definition taken up again by Kant—is undertaken from the point of view of knowledge and not from the point of view of being. The passage from possibility to being such as Leibniz conceives it (the necessary is a being whose possibility implies its existence) marks the passage from our ignorance to knowledge. In fact since possibility precedes existence, it can be possibility only with respect to our thought. It is an external possibility in relation to the being whose possibility it is, since being unrolls from it like a consequence from a principle. But we pointed out earlier that the notion of possibility could be considered in two aspects. We can make of it a subjective indication. The statement, "It is possible that Pierre is dead," indicates that I am in ignorance concerning Pierre's fate, and in this case it is a witness who decides the possible in the presence of the world. Being has its possibility outside of itself in the pure regard which gauges its chances of being; possibility can indeed be given to us before being; but it is to us that it is given and it is in no way the possibility of this being. The billiard ball which rolls on the table does not possess the possibility of being turned from its path by a fold in the cloth; neither does the possibility of deviation belong to the cloth; it can be established only by a witness synthetically as an external relation. But possibility can also appear to us as an ontological structure of the real. Then it belongs to certain beings as their possibility; it is the possibility which they are, which they have to be. In this case being sustains its own possibilities in being; it is their foundation, and the necessity of being can not then be derived from its possibility. In a word, God, if he exists, is contingent.

Thus the being of consciousness, since this being is in itself in order to nihilate itself in for-itself, remains contingent; that is, it is not the role of consciousness either to give being to itself or to receive it from others. In addition to the fact that the ontological proof like the cosmological proof fails to establish a necessary being, the explanation and the foundation of my being—in so far as I am a particular being—can not be sought in necessary being. The premises, "Everything which is contingent must find a foundation in a necessary being. Now I am contingent," mark a desire to find a foundation and do not furnish the explicative link with a real foundation. Such premises could not in any way account for this contingency but only for the abstract idea of contingency in general. Furthermore the question here is one of value, not fact.⁷ But while being in-itself is contingent, it recovers itself by degenerating into a for-itself. It is, in order to lose itself in a for-itself. In a word being is and can only be. But

⁷ This reasoning indeed is explicitly based on the exigencies of reason.

the peculiar possibility of being—that which is revealed in the nihilating act—is of being the foundation of itself as consciousness through the sacrificial act which nihilates being. The for-itself is the in-itself losing itself as in-itself in order to found itself as consciousness. Thus consciousness holds within itself its own being-as-consciousness, and since it is its own nihilation, it can refer only to itself; but that which is annihilated⁸ in consciousness—though we can not call it the foundation of consciousness—is the contingent in-itself. The in-itself can not provide the foundation for anything; if it founds itself, it does so by giving itself the modification of the for-itself. It is the foundation of itself in so far as it is already no longer in-itself, and we encounter here again the origin of every foundation. If being in-itself can be neither its own foundation nor that of other beings, the whole idea of foundation comes into the world through the for-itself. It is not only that the for-itself as a nihilated in-itself is itself given a foundation, but with it foundation appears for the first time.

It follows that this in-itself, engulfed and nihilated in the absolute event which is the appearance of the foundation or upsurge of the for-itself, remains at the heart of the for-itself as its original contingency. Consciousness is its own foundation but it remains contingent in order that there may be a consciousness rather than an infinity of pure and simple in-itself. The absolute event or for-itself is contingent in its very being. If I decipher the givens of the pre-reflective cogito, I establish, to be sure, that the for-itself refers to itself. Whatever the for-itself may be, it is this in the mode of consciousness of being. Thirst refers to the consciousness of thirst, which it is, as to its foundation—and conversely. But the totality “reflected—reflecting,” if it could be given, would be contingency and in-itself. But this totality can not be attained, since I can not say either that the consciousness of thirst is consciousness of thirst, or that thirst is thirst. It is there as a nihilated totality, as the evanescent unity of the phenomenon. If I apprehend the phenomenon as plurality, this plurality indicates itself as a total unity, and hence its meaning is its contingency. That is, I can ask myself, “Why am I thirsty? Why am I conscious of this glass? Of this Me?” But as soon as I consider this totality in in-itself, it nihilates itself under my regard. It is not; it is in order not to be, and I return to the for-itself apprehended in its suggestion of duality as the foundation of itself. I am angry because I produce myself as consciousness of anger. Suppress this self-causation which constitutes the being of the for-itself, and you will no longer find anything, not even “anger-in-itself;” for anger exists by nature as for-itself. Thus the for-itself is sustained by a perpetual contingency for which it assumes the responsibility and which it assimilates without ever being able to suppress it. This perpetually evanescent con-

⁸ Sartre says “annihilated” here, but I feel that he must have meant “nihilated” since he has told us earlier that being cannot be annihilated. Tr.

tingency of the in-itself which, without ever allowing itself to be apprehended, haunts the for-itself and reattaches it to being-in-itself—this contingency is what we shall call the *facticity* of the for-itself. It is this facticity which permits us to say that the for-itself is, that it exists, although we can never realize the facticity and although we always apprehend it through the for-itself.

We indicated earlier that we can be nothing without playing at being.⁹ "If I am a café waiter," we said, "this can be only in the mode of not being one." And that is true. If I could be a café waiter, I should suddenly constitute myself as a contingent block of identity. And that I am not. This contingent being in-itself always escapes me. But in order that I may freely give a meaning to the obligations which my state involves, then in one sense at the heart of the for-itself, as a perpetually evanescent totality, being-in-itself must be given as the evanescent contingency of my situation. This is the result of the fact that while I must *play at being* a café waiter in order to be one, still it would be in vain for me to play at being a diplomat or a sailor, for I would not be one. This inapprehensible fact of my condition, this impalpable difference which distinguishes this drama of realization from drama pure and simple is what causes the for-itself, while choosing the *meaning* of its situation and while constituting itself as the foundation of itself in situation, *not to choose* its position. This part of my condition is what causes me to apprehend myself simultaneously as totally responsible for my being—inasmuch as I am its foundation—and yet as totally unjustifiable. Without facticity consciousness could choose its attachments to the world in the same way as the souls in Plato's *Republic* choose their condition. I could determine myself to "be born a worker" or to "be born a bourgeois." But on the other hand facticity can not constitute me as *being* a bourgeois or *being* a worker. It is not even strictly speaking a *resistance of fact* since it is only by recovering it in the substructure of the *pre-reflective cogito* that I confer on it its meaning and its resistance. Facticity is only one indication which I give myself of the being to which I must reunite myself in order to be what I am.

It is impossible to grasp facticity in its brute nudity, since all that we will find of it is already recovered and freely constructed. The simple fact "of being there," at that table, in that chair is already the pure object of a limiting-concept and as such can not be grasped. Yet it is contained in my "consciousness of being there," as its full contingency, as the nihilated in-itself on the basis of which the for-itself produces itself as consciousness of being there. The for-itself looking deep into itself as the consciousness of being there will never discover anything in itself but *motivations*; that is, it will be perpetually referred to itself and to its constant freedom. (I am there in order to . . . etc.) But the contingency which paralyzes these motivations to the same degree as they

⁹ Part One, chapter II, section ii. "Patterns of Bad Faith."

totally found themselves is the facticity of the for-itself. The relation of the for-itself, which is its own foundation qua for-itself, to facticity can be correctly termed a factual necessity. It is indeed this factual necessity which Descartes and Husserl seized upon as constituting the evidence of the *cogito*. The for-itself is necessary in so far as it provides its own foundation. And this is why it is the object reflected by an apodictic intuition. I can not doubt that I am. But in so far as this for-itself as such could also not be, it has all the contingency of fact. Just as my nihilating freedom is apprehended in anguish, so the for-itself is conscious of its facticity. It has the feeling of its complete gratuity; it apprehends itself as being there for nothing, as being *de trop*.

We must not confuse facticity with that Cartesian substance whose attribute is thought. To be sure, thinking substance exists only as it thinks; and since it is a created thing, it participates in the contingency of the *ens creatum*. But it is. It preserves the character of being-in-itself in its integrity, although the for-itself is its attribute. This is what is called Descartes' substantialist illusion. For us, on the other hand, the appearance of the for-itself or absolute event refers indeed to the effort of an in-itself to found itself; it corresponds to an attempt on the part of being to remove contingency from its being. But this attempt results in the nihilation of the in-itself, because the in-itself can not found itself without introducing the *self* or a reflective, nihilating reference into the absolute identity of its being and consequently degenerating into *for-itself*. The for-itself corresponds then to an expanding de-structuring of the in-itself, and the in-itself is nihilated and absorbed in its attempt to found itself. Facticity is not then a substance of which the for-itself would be the attribute and which would produce thought without exhausting itself in that very production. It simply resides in the for-itself as a memory of being, as its unjustifiable presence in the world. Being-in-itself can found its nothingness but not its being. In its decompression it nihilates itself in a for-itself which becomes qua for-itself its own foundation; but the contingency which the for-itself has derived from the in-itself remains out of reach. It is what remains of the in-itself in the for-itself as facticity and what causes the for-itself to have only a factual necessity; that is, it is the foundation of its consciousness-of-being or existence, but on no account can it found its presence. Thus consciousness can in no case prevent itself from being and yet it is totally responsible for its being.

III. THE FOR-ITSELF AND THE BEING OF VALUE

ANY study of human reality must begin with the *cogito*. But the Cartesian "I think" is conceived in the instantaneous perspective of temporality. Can we find in the heart of the *cogito* a way of transcending this instantaneity? If human reality were limited to the being of the "I think,"

it would have only the truth of an instant. And it is indeed true that with Descartes the *cogito* is an instantaneous totality, since by itself it makes no claim on the future and since an act of continuous "creation" is necessary to make it pass from one instant to another. But can we even conceive of the truth of an instant? Does the *cogito* not in its own way engage both past and future? Heidegger is so persuaded that the "I think" of Husserl is a trap for larks, fascinating and ensnaring, that he has completely avoided any appeal to consciousness in his description of *Dasein*. His goal is to show it immediately as care; that is, as escaping itself in the project of self toward the possibilities which it is. It is this projection of the self outside the self which he calls "understanding" (*Verstand*) and which permits him to establish human reality as being a "revealing-revealed." But this attempt to show first the escape from self of the *Dasein* is going to encounter in turn insurmountable difficulties; we cannot first suppress the dimension "consciousness," not even if it is in order to re-establish it subsequently. Understanding has meaning only if it is consciousness of understanding. My possibility can exist as *my* possibility only if it is my consciousness which escapes itself toward my possibility. Otherwise the whole system of being and its possibilities will fall into the unconscious—that is into the in-itself. Behold, we are thrown back again towards the *cogito*. We must make this our point of departure. Can we extend it without losing the benefits of reflective evidence? What has the description of the for-itself revealed to us?

First we have encountered a nihilation in which the being of the for-itself is affected in its being. This revelation of nothingness did not seem to us to pass beyond the limits of the *cogito*. But let us consider more closely.

The for-itself can not sustain nihilation without determining itself as a lack of *being*. This means that the nihilation does not coincide with a simple introduction of emptiness into consciousness. An external being has not expelled the in-itself from consciousness; rather the for-itself is perpetually determining itself not to be the in-itself. This means that it can establish itself only in terms of the in-itself and against the in-itself. Thus since the nihilation is the nihilation of being, it represents the original connection between the being of the for-itself and the being of the in-itself. The concrete, real in-itself is wholly present to the heart of consciousness as that which consciousness determines itself not to be. The *cogito* must necessarily lead us to discover this total, out-of-reach presence of the in-itself. Of course the fact of this presence will be the very transcendence of the for-itself. But it is precisely the nihilation which is the origin of transcendence conceived as the original bond between the for-itself and the in-itself. Thus we catch a glimpse of a way of getting out of the *cogito*. We shall see later indeed that the profound meaning of the *cogito* is essentially to refer outside itself. But it is not yet time to

describe this characteristic of the for-itself. What our ontological description has immediately revealed is that this being is the foundation of itself as a lack of being; that is, that it determines its being by means of a being which it is not.

Nevertheless there are many ways of not being and some of them do not touch the inner nature of the being which is not what it is not. If, for example, I say of an inkwell that it is not a bird, the inkwell and the bird remain untouched by the negation. This is an external relation which can be established only by a human reality acting as witness. By contrast, there is a type of negation which establishes an internal relation between what one denies and that concerning which the denial is made.¹⁰

Of all internal negations, the one which penetrates most deeply into being, the one which constitutes *in its being* the being concerning which it makes the denial along with the being which it denies—this negation is lack. This lack does not belong to the nature of the in-itself, which is all positivity. It appears in the world only with the upsurge of human reality. It is only in the human world that there can be lacks. A lack presupposes a trinity: that which is missing or “the lacking,” that which misses what is lacking or “the existing,” and a totality which has been broken by the lacking and which would be restored by the synthesis of “the lacking” and “the existing”—this is “the lacked.”¹¹ The being which is released to the intuition of human reality is always that to which some *thing is lacking*—i.e., the existing. For example, if I say that the moon is not full and that one quarter is lacking, I base this judgment on full intuition of the crescent moon. Thus what is released to intuition is an in-itself which by itself is neither complete nor incomplete but which simply is what it is, without relation with other beings. In order for this in-itself to be grasped as the crescent moon, it is necessary that a human reality surpass the given toward the project of the realized totality—here the disk of the full moon—and return toward the given to constitute it as the crescent moon; that is, in order to realize it in its being in terms of the totality which becomes its foundation. In this same surpassing the lacking will be posited as that whose synthetic addition to the existing will reconstitute the synthetic totality of the lacked. In this sense the lacking is of the same nature as the existing; it would suffice to reverse the situation in order for it to become the existing to which the lacking is missing, while the existing would become the lacking. This lacking as the comple-

¹⁰ Hegelian opposition belongs to this type of negation. But this opposition must itself be based on an original internal negation; that is, on lack. For example, if the non-essential becomes in its turn the essential, this is because it is experienced as a lack in the heart of the essential.

¹¹ *Le manquant*, “the lacking,” *l'existant*, “the existing”; *le manqué*, “the lacked.” *Le manque* is “the lack.” At times when *manqué* is used as an adjective, I have translated it as “missing,” e.g., *l'en-soi manqué*, “the missing in-itself.” Tr.

ment of the existing is determined in its being by the synthetic totality of the lacked. Thus *in the human world*, the incomplete being which is released to intuition as lacking is constituted in its being by the lacked—that is, by what it is not. It is the full moon which confers on the crescent moon its being as crescent; what-is-not determines what-is. It is in the being of the existing, as the correlate of a human transcendence, to lead outside itself to the being which it is not—as to its meaning.

Human reality by which lack appears in the world must be itself a lack. For lack can come into being only through lack; the in-itself can not be the occasion of lack in the in-itself. In other words, in order for being to be lacking or lacked, it is necessary that a being make itself its own lack; only a being which lacks can surpass being toward the lacked.

The existence of desire as a human fact is sufficient to prove that human reality is a lack. In fact how can we explain desire if we insist on viewing it as a *psychic state*; that is, as a being whose nature is to be what it is? A being which is what it is, to the degree that it is considered as being what it is, summons nothing to itself in order to complete itself. An incomplete circle does not call for completion unless it is surpassed by human transcendence. In itself it is complete and perfectly positive as an open curve. A psychic state which existed with the sufficiency of this curve could not possess in addition the slightest “appeal to” something else; it would be itself without any relation to what is not it. In order to constitute it as hunger or thirst, an external transcendence surpassing it toward the totality “satisfied hunger” would be necessary, just as the crescent moon is surpassed toward the full moon.

We will not get out of the difficulty by making desire a *conatus* conceived in the manner of a physical force. For the *conatus* once again, even if we grant it the efficiency of a cause, can not possess in itself the character of a reaching out toward another state. The *conatus* as the *producer* of states can not be identified with desire as the *appeal* from a state. Neither will recourse to psycho-physiological parallelism enable us better to clear away the difficulties. Thirst as an organic phenomenon, as a “physiological” need of water, does not exist. An organism deprived of water presents certain positive phenomena: for example, a certain coagulating thickening of the blood, which provokes in turn certain other phenomena. The ensemble is a positive state of the organism which refers only to itself, exactly as the thickening of a solution from which the water has evaporated can not be considered by itself as the solution’s desire of water. If we suppose an exact correspondence between the mental and the physiological, this correspondence can be established only on the basis of ontological identity, as Spinoza has seen. Consequently the being of psychic thirst will be the being in itself of a *state*, and we are referred once again to a transcendent witness. But then the thirst will be desire for this transcendence but not for itself; it will be desire in the eyes of another.

If desire is to be able to be desire to itself it must necessarily be itself transcendence; that is, it must by nature be an escape from itself toward the desired object. In other words, it must be a lack—but not an object-lack, a lack undergone, created by the surpassing which it is not; it must be its own lack of —. Desire is a lack of being. It is haunted in its inmost being by the being of which it is desire. Thus it bears witness to the existence of lack in the being of human reality. But if human reality is lack, then it is through human reality that the trinity of the existing, the lacking and the lacked comes into being. What exactly are the three terms of this trinity?

That which plays here the role of the existing is what is released to the cogito as the immediate of the desire; for example, it is this for-itself which we have apprehended as not being what it is and being what it is not. But how are we to define the lacked?

To answer this question, we must return to the idea of lack and determine more exactly the bond which unites the existing to the lacking. This bond can not be one of simple contiguity. If what is lacking is in its very absence still profoundly present at the heart of the existing, it is because the existing and the lacking are at the same moment apprehended and surpassed in the unity of a single totality. And that which constitutes itself as lack can do so only by surpassing itself toward one great broken form. Thus lack is appearance on the ground of a totality. Moreover it matters little whether this totality has been originally given and is now broken (e.g. "The arms of the Venus di Milo are now lacking") or whether it has never yet been realized. (e.g. "He lacks courage.") What is important is only that the lacking and the existing are given or are apprehended as about to be annihilated in the unity of the totality which is lacked. Everything which is lacking is lacking to — for —. What is given in the unity of a primitive upsurge is the for, conceived as not yet being or as not being any longer, an absence toward which the curtailed existing surpasses itself or is surpassed and thereby constitutes itself as curtailed. What is the for of human reality?

The for-itself, as the foundation of itself, is the upsurge of the negation. The for-itself founds itself in so far as it denies *in relation to itself* a certain being or a mode of being. What it denies or nihilates, as we know, is being-in-itself. But no matter what being-in-itself: human reality is before all else its own nothingness. What it denies or nihilates *in relation to itself* as for-itself can be only *itself*. The meaning of human reality as nihilated is constituted by this nihilation and this presence in it of what it nihilates; hence the self-as-being-in-itself is what human reality lacks and what makes its meaning. Since human reality in its primitive relation to itself is not what it is, its relation to itself is not primitive and can derive its meaning only from an original relation which is the *null relation* or identity. It is the self which would be what it is which allows the for-itself to be

apprehended as not being what it is; the relation denied in the definition of the for-itself—which as such should be first posited—is a relation (given as perpetually absent) between the for-itself and itself in the mode of identity. The meaning of the subtle confusion by which thirst escapes and is not thirst (in so far as it is consciousness of thirst), is a thirst which would be thirst and which haunts it. What the for-itself lacks is the self—or itself as in-itself.

Nevertheless we must not confuse this missing in-itself (the lacked), with that of facticity. The in-itself of facticity in its failure to found itself is reabsorbed in pure presence in the world on the part of the for-itself. The missing in-itself, on the other hand, is pure absence. Moreover the failure of the act to found the in-itself has caused the for-itself to rise up from the in-itself as the foundation of its own nothingness. But the meaning of the missing act of founding remains as transcendent. The for-itself in its being is failure because it is the foundation only of itself as nothingness. In truth this failure is its very being, but it has meaning only if the for-itself apprehends itself as failure in the presence of the being which it has failed to be; that is, of the being which would be the foundation of its being and no longer merely the foundation of its nothingness—or, to put it another way, which would be its foundation as coincidence with itself. By nature the *cogito* refers to the lacking and to the lacked, for the *cogito* is haunted by being, as Descartes well realized.

Such is the origin of transcendence. Human reality is its own surpassing toward what it lacks; it surpasses itself toward the particular being which it would be if it were what it is. Human reality is not something which exists first in order afterwards to lack this or that; it exists first as lack and in immediate, synthetic connection with what it lacks. Thus the pure event by which human reality rises as a presence in the world is apprehended by itself as its own lack. In its coming into existence human reality grasps itself as an incomplete being. It apprehends itself as being in so far as it is not, in the presence of the particular totality which it lacks and which it is in the form of not being it and which is what it is. Human reality is a perpetual surpassing toward a coincidence with itself which is never given. If the *cogito* reaches toward being, it is because by its very thrust it surpasses itself toward being by qualifying itself in its being as the being to which coincidence with self is lacking in order for it to be what it is. The *cogito* is indissolubly linked to being-in-itself, not as a thought to its object—which would make the in-itself relative—but as a lack to that which defines its lack. In this sense the second Cartesian proof is rigorous. Imperfect being surpasses itself toward perfect being; the being which is the foundation only of its nothingness surpasses itself toward the being which is the foundation of its being. But the being toward which human reality surpasses itself is not a transcendent God; it is at the heart of human reality; it is only human reality itself as totality.

This totality is not the pure and simple contingent in-itself of the transcendent. If what consciousness apprehends as the being toward which it surpasses itself were the pure in-itself, it would coincide with the annihilation of consciousness. But consciousness does not surpass itself toward its annihilation; it does not want to lose itself in the in-itself of identity at the limit of its surpassing. It is for the for-itself as such that the for-itself lays claim to being-in-itself.

Thus this perpetually absent being which haunts the for-itself is itself fixed in the in-itself. It is the impossible synthesis of the for-itself and the in-itself; it would be its own foundation not as nothingness but as being and would preserve within it the necessary translucency of consciousness along with the coincidence with itself of being-in-itself. It would preserve in it that turning back upon the self which conditions every necessity and every foundation. But this return to the self would be without distance; it would not be presence to itself, but identity with itself. In short, this being would be exactly the self which we have shown can exist only as a perpetually evanescent relation, but it would be this self as substantial being. Thus human reality arises as such in the presence of its own totality or self as a lack of that totality. And this totality can not be given by nature, since it combines in itself the incompatible characteristics of the in-itself and the for-itself.

Let no one reproach us with capriciously inventing a being of this kind; when by a further movement of thought the being and absolute absence of this totality are hypostasized as transcendence beyond the world, it takes on the name of God. Is not God a being who is what he is—in that he is all positivity and the foundation of the world—and at the same time a being who is not what he is and who is what he is not—in that he is self-consciousness and the necessary foundation of himself? The being of human reality is suffering because it rises in being as perpetually haunted by a totality which it is without being able to be it, precisely because it could not attain the in-itself without losing itself as for-itself. Human reality therefore is by nature an unhappy consciousness with no possibility of surpassing its unhappy state.

But what exactly is the nature of this being toward which unhappy consciousness surpasses itself? Shall we say that it does not exist? Those contradictions which we discovered in it prove only that it can not be realized. Nothing can hold out against this self-evident truth: consciousness can exist only as engaged in this being which surrounds it on all sides and which paralyzes it with its phantom presence. Shall we say that it is a being relative to consciousness? This would be to confuse it with the object of a thesis. This being is not posited through and before consciousness; there is no consciousness of this being since it haunts non-thetic self-consciousness. It points to consciousness as the meaning of its being and yet consciousness is no more conscious of it than of itself. Still it can not

escape from consciousness; but inasmuch as consciousness enjoys being a consciousness (of) being, *this being is there*. Consciousness does not confer meaning on this being as it does for this inkwell or this pencil; but without this being, which it is in the form of not being it, consciousness would not be consciousness—i.e., lack. On the contrary, consciousness derives for itself its meaning as consciousness from this being. This being comes into the world along with consciousness, at once in its heart and outside it; it is absolute transcendence in absolute immanence. It has no priority over consciousness, and consciousness has no priority over it. They form a *dyad*. Of course this being could not exist without the for-itself, but neither could the for-itself exist without it. Consciousness in relation to this being stands in the mode of *being this being*, for this being is consciousness, but as a being which consciousness can not be. It is consciousness itself, in the heart of consciousness, and yet out of reach, as an absence, an unrealizable. Its nature is to inclose its own contradiction within itself; its relation to the for-itself is a total immanence which is achieved in total transcendence.

Furthermore this being need not be conceived as present to consciousness with only the abstract characteristics which our study has established. The concrete consciousness arises in situation, and it is a unique, individualized consciousness of this situation and (of) itself in situation. It is to this concrete consciousness that the self is present, and all the concrete characteristics of consciousness have their correlates in the totality of the self. The self is individual; it is the individual completion of the self which haunts the for-itself.

A feeling, for example, is a feeling in the presence of a norm; that is, a feeling of the same type but one which would be what it is. This norm or totality of the affective self is directly present as a lack suffered in the very heart of suffering. One suffers and one suffers from not suffering enough. The suffering of which we speak is never exactly that which we feel. What we call "noble" or "good" or "true" suffering and what moves us is the suffering which we read on the faces of others, better yet in portraits, in the face of a statue, in a tragic mask. It is a suffering which has *being*. It is presented to us as a compact, objective whole which did not await our coming in order to be and which overflows the consciousness which we have of it; it is there in the midst of the world, impenetrable and dense, like this tree or this stone; it endures; finally it is what it is. We can speak of it—that suffering there which is expressed by that set of the mouth, by that frown. It is supported and expressed by the physiognomy but not created by it. Suffering is posited upon the physiognomy; it is beyond passivity as beyond activity, beyond negation as beyond affirmation—it is. However it can be only as consciousness of self. We know well that this mask does not express the unconscious grimace of a sleeper or the rictus of a dead man. It refers to possibilities, to a situation in the

world. The suffering is the conscious relation to these possibilities, to this situation, but it is solidified, cast in the bronze of being. And it is as such that it fascinates us; it stands as a degraded approximation of that suffering-in-itself which haunts our own suffering. The suffering which I experience, on the contrary, is never adequate suffering, due to the fact that it nihilates itself as in itself by the very act by which it founds itself. It escapes as suffering toward the consciousness of suffering. I can never be surprised by it, for it is only to the exact degree that I experience it. Its translucency removes from it all depth. I can not observe it as I observe the suffering of the statue, since I make my own suffering and since I know it. If I must suffer, I should prefer that my suffering would seize me and flow over me like a storm, but instead I must raise it into existence in my free spontaneity. I should like simultaneously to be it and to conquer it, but this enormous, opaque suffering, which should transport me out of myself, continues instead to touch me lightly with its wing, and I can not grasp it. I find only myself, myself who moans, myself who wails, myself who in order to realize this suffering which I am must play without respite the drama of suffering. I wring my hands, I cry in order that being-in-itselfs, their sounds, their gestures may run through the world, ridden by the suffering-in-itself which I can not be. Each groan, each facial expression of the man who suffers aims at sculpturing a statue-in-itself of suffering. But this statue will never exist save through others and for others. My suffering suffers from being what it is not and from not being what it is. At the point of being made one with itself, it escapes, separated from itself by nothing, by that nothingness of which it is itself the foundation. It is loquacious because it is not adequate, but its ideal is silence,—the silence of the statue, of the beaten man who lowers his head and veils his face without speaking. But with this man too—it is for me that he does not speak. In himself he chatters incessantly, for the words of the inner language are like the outlines of the “self” of suffering. It is for my eyes that he is “crushed” by suffering; in himself he feels himself responsible for that grief which he wills even while not wishing it and which he does not wish even while willing it, that grief which is haunted by a perpetual absence—the absence of the motionless, mute suffering which is the self, the concrete, out-of-reach totality of the for-itself which suffers, the for of Human-Reality in suffering. We can see that my suffering never posits this suffering-in-itself which visits it. My real suffering is not an effort to reach to the self. But it can be suffering only as consciousness (of) not being enough suffering in the presence of that full and absent suffering.

Now we can ascertain more exactly what is the being of the self: it is value. Value is affected with the double character, which moralists have very inadequately explained, of both being unconditionally and not being. Qua value indeed, value has being, but this normative existent does not have to be precisely as reality. Its being is to be value; that is, not-to-be

being. Thus the being of value qua value is the being of what does not have being. Value then appears inapprehensible. To take it as being is to risk totally misunderstanding its unreality and to make of it, as sociologists do, a requirement of fact among other facts. In this case the contingency of being destroys value. But conversely if one looks only at the ideality of values, one is going to extract being from them, and then for lack of being, they dissolve. Of course, as Scheler has shown, I can achieve an intuition of values in terms of concrete exemplifications; I can grasp nobility in a noble act. But value thus apprehended is not given as existing on the same level of being as the act on which it confers value—in the way, for example, that the essence “red” is in relation to a particular red. Value is given as a beyond of the acts confronted, as the limit, for example, of the infinite progression of noble acts. Value is beyond being. Yet if we are not to be taken in by fine words, we must recognize that this being which is beyond being possesses being in some way at least.

These considerations suffice to make us admit that human reality is that by which value arrives in the world. But the meaning of being for value is that it is that toward which a being surpasses its being; every value-oriented act is a wrenching away from its own being toward —. Since value is always and everywhere the beyond of all surpassings, it can be considered as the unconditioned unity of all surpassings of being. Thereby it makes a dyad with the reality which originally surpasses its being and by which surpassing comes into being—i.e., with human reality. We see also that since value is the unconditioned beyond of all surpassings, it must be originally the beyond of the very being which surpasses, for that is the only way in which value can be the original beyond of all possible surpassings. If every surpassing must be able to be surpassed, it is necessary that the being which surpasses should be a *priori* surpassed in so far as it is the very source of surpassings. Thus value taken in its origin, or the supreme value, is the beyond and the for of transcendence. It is the beyond which surpasses and which provides the foundation for all my surpassings but toward which I can never surpass myself, precisely because my surpassings presuppose it.

In all cases of lack value is “the lacked;” it is not “the lacking.” Value is the self in so far as the self haunts the heart of the for-itself as that for which the for-itself is. The supreme value toward which consciousness at every instant surpasses itself by its very being is the absolute being of the self with its characteristics of identity, of purity, of permanence, etc., and as its own foundation. This is what enables us to conceive why value can simultaneously be and not be. It is as the meaning and the beyond of all surpassing; it is as the absent in-itself which haunts being-for-itself. But as soon as we consider value, we see that it is itself a surpassing of this being-in-itself, since value *gives being to itself*. It is beyond its own being since with the type of being of coincidence with self, it immediately sur-

passes this being, its permanence, its purity, its consistency, its identity, its silence, by reclaiming these qualities by virtue of presence to itself. And conversely if we start by considering it as presence to itself, this presence immediately is solidified, fixed in the in-itself. Moreover it is in its being the missing totality toward which a being makes itself be. It arises for a being, not as this being is what it is in full contingency, but as it is the foundation of its own nihilation. In this sense value haunts being as being founds itself but not as being is. Value haunts freedom. This means that the relation of value to the for-itself is very particular: it is the being which has to be in so far as it is the foundation of its nothingness of being. Yet while it has to be this being, this is not because it is under the pressure of an external constraint, nor because value, like the Unmoved Mover of Aristotle, exercises over it an attraction of fact, nor is it because its being has been received; but it is because in its being it makes itself be as having to be this being. In a word the self, the for-itself, and their inter-relation stand within the limits of an unconditioned freedom—in the sense that *nothing* makes value exist—unless it is that freedom which by the same stroke makes me myself exist—and also within the limits of concrete facticity—since as the foundation of its nothingness, the for-itself can not be the foundation of its being. There is then a total contingency of being-for-value (which will come up again in connection with morality to paralyze and relativize it) and at the same time a free and absolute necessity.¹²

Value in its original upsurge is not posited by the for-itself; it is consubstantial with it—to such a degree that there is no consciousness which is not haunted by its value and that human-reality in the broad sense includes both the for-itself and value. If value haunts the for-itself without being posited by it, this is because value is not the object of a thesis; otherwise the for-itself would have to be a positional object to itself since value and the for-itself can arise only in the consubstantial unity of a dyad. Thus the for-itself as a non-thetic self-consciousness does not exist in the face of value in the sense that for Leibniz the monad exists “alone in the face of God.” Value therefore is not known at this stage since knowledge posits

¹² One will perhaps be tempted to translate the trinity under consideration into Hegelian terms and to make of the in-itself, the thesis, of the for-itself the antithesis, and of the in-itself-for-itself or value the synthesis. But it must be noted here that while the For-itself lacks the In-itself, the In-itself does not lack the For-itself. There is then no reciprocity in the opposition. In a word, the For-itself remains non-essential and contingent in relation to the In-itself, and it is this non-essentiality which we earlier called its facticity. In addition, the synthesis or value would indeed be a return to the thesis, then a return upon itself; but as this is an unrealizable totality, the For-itself is not a moment which can be surpassed. As such its nature approaches much nearer to the “ambiguous” realities of Kierkegaard. Furthermore we find here a double play of unilateral oppositions: the For-itself in one sense lacks the In-itself, which does not lack the For-itself; but in another sense the In-itself lacks its own possibility (or the lacking For-itself), which in this case does not lack the In-itself.

the object in the face of consciousness. Value is merely given with the non-thetic translucency of the for-itself, which makes itself be as the consciousness of being. Value is everywhere and nowhere; at the heart of the nihilating relation "reflection-reflecting," it is present and out of reach, and it is simply lived as the concrete meaning of that lack which makes my present being. In order for value to become the object of a thesis, the for-itself which it haunts must also appear before the regard of reflection. Reflective consciousness in fact accomplishes two things by the same stroke; the *Erlebnis* reflected-on is posited in its nature as lack and value is disengaged as the out-of-reach meaning of what is lacked. Thus reflective consciousness can be properly called a moral consciousness since it can not arise without at the same moment disclosing values. It is obvious that I remain free in my reflective consciousness to direct my attention on these values or to neglect them—exactly as it depends on me to look more closely at this table, my pen, or my package of tobacco. But whether they are the object of a detailed attention or not, in any case they are.

It is not necessary to conclude, however, that the reflective regard is the only one which can make value appear, nor should we by analogy project the values of our for-itself into the world of transcendence. If the object of intuition is a phenomenon of human reality but transcendent, it is released immediately with its value, for the for-itself of the Other is not a hidden phenomenon which would be given only as the conclusion of a reasoning by analogy. It manifests itself originally to my for-itself; as we shall see, the presence of the for-itself as for-others is even the necessary condition for the constitution of the for-itself as such. In this upsurge of the for-others, value is given as in the upsurge of the for-itself, although in a different mode of being. But we can not treat here the objective encounter with values in the world since we have not elucidated the nature of the for-others. We shall return to the examination of this question in the third part of this work.

IV. THE FOR-ITSELF AND THE BEING OF POSSIBILITIES

WE have seen that human reality as for-itself is a lack and that what it lacks is a certain coincidence with itself. Concretely, each particular for-itself (*Erlebnis*) lacks a certain particular and concrete reality, which if the for-itself were synthetically assimilated with it, would transform the for-itself into itself. It lacks something for something else—as the broken disc of the moon lacks that which would be necessary to complete it and transform it into a full moon. Thus the lacking arises in the process of transcendence and is determined by a return toward the existing in terms of the lacked. The lacking thus defined is transcendent and complementary in relation to the existing. They are then of the same nature. What the

crescent moon lacks in order to be a full moon is precisely a fragment of moon; what the obtuse angle ABC lacks in order to make two right angles is the acute angle CBD. What the for-itself lacks in order to be made a whole with itself is the for-itself. But we are by no means dealing with a strange for-itself; that is, with a for-itself which I am not. In fact since the risen ideal is the coincidence with self, the lacking for-itself is a for-itself which I am. But on the other hand, if I were it in the mode of identity, the ensemble would become an in-itself. I am the lacking for-itself in the mode of having to be the for-itself which I am not, in order to identify myself with it in the unity of the self. Thus the original transcendent relation of the for-itself to the self perpetually outlines a project of identification of the for-itself with an absent for-itself which it is and which it lacks. What is given as the peculiar lack of each for-itself and what is strictly defined as lacking to precisely this for-itself and no other is the possibility of the for-itself. The possible rises on the ground of the nihilation of the for-itself. It is not conceived thematically afterwards as a means of reuniting the self. Rather the upsurge of the for-itself as the nihilation of the in-itself and the decompression of being causes possibility to arise as one of the aspects of this decompression of being; that is, as a way of being what one is—at a distance from the self. Thus the for-itself can not appear without being haunted by value and projected toward its own possibles. Yet as soon as it refers us to its possibles, the *cogito* drives us outside the instant toward that which it is in the mode of not being it.

In order to understand better how human reality both is and is not its own possibilities, we must return to the notion of the possible and attempt to elucidate it.

With the possible as with value there is the greatest difficulty in understanding its being, for it is given as prior to the being of which it is the pure possibility; and yet qua possible, at least, it necessarily must have being. Do we not say, "It is possible that he may come." Since Leibniz the term "possible" is usually applied to an event which is not engaged in an existing causal series such that the event can be surely determined and which involves no contradiction either with itself or with the system under consideration. Thus defined the possible is possible only with regard to knowledge since we are not in a position either to affirm or to deny the possible confronted.

Hence we may take two attitudes in the face of the possible: We can consider, as Spinoza did, that possibilities exist only in connection with our ignorance and that they disappear when our ignorance disappears. In this case the possible is only a subjective stage on the road to perfect knowledge; it has only the reality of a psychic mode; as confused or curtailed thought it has a concrete being but not as a property of the world. But it is also permissible, as Leibniz does, to make of the infinity of possibles ob-

jects of thought for the divine understanding and so confer on them a mode of absolute reality; this position reserves for the divine will the power to realize the best system among them. In this case, although the monad's chain of perceptions is strictly determined, and although in terms of the very formula of Adam's substance an all-knowing being can establish with certainty Adam's decision, it is not absurd to say: "It is possible that Adam might not pick the apple." This means only that there exists by virtue of the thought of the divine understanding another system of co-possibles such that Adam figures there as having not eaten the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge.

But is this conception so different from that of Spinoza? Actually the reality of the possible is uniquely that of the divine *thought!* This means that it has being as thought which has not been realized. Of course the idea of subjectivity has been here pushed to its limit, for we are dealing with a divine consciousness, not mine; and if we have at the outset made a point of confusing subjectivity and finitude, subjectivity disappears when the understanding becomes infinite. Yet the fact remains that the possible is a thought *which is only thought*. Leibniz himself seems to have wished to confer an autonomy and a sort of peculiar weight on possibilities, for several of the metaphysical fragments published by Couturat show us possibles organizing themselves into systems of co-possibles in which the fullest and richest tend by themselves to be realized. But there is here only a suggestion of such a doctrine, and Leibniz has not developed it—doubtless because he could not do so. To give possibles a tendency toward being means either that the possible is already in full being and that it has the same type of being—in the sense that we grant to the bud a tendency to become a flower—or else that the possible in the bosom of the divine understanding is already an idea-force and that the maximum of idea-forces organized in a system automatically releases the divine will. But in the latter case we do not get out of the subjective. If then we define possible as non-contradictory, it can have being only as the thought of a being prior to the real world or prior to the pure consciousness of the world such as it is. In either case the possible loses its nature as possible and is reabsorbed in the subjective being of the representation.

But this represented-being of the possible can not account for its nature; on the contrary it destroys its nature. In the everyday use which we make of the possible, we can in no way apprehend it either as an aspect of our ignorance or as a non-contradictory structure belonging to a world not realized and at the margin of this world. The possible appears to us as a property of beings. After glancing at the sky I state, "It is possible that it may rain." I do not understand the "possible" here as meaning "without contradiction with the present state of the sky." This possibility belongs to the sky as a threat; it represents a surpassing on the part of these clouds, which I perceive, toward rain. The clouds carry this surpassing within

themselves, which means not that the surpassing will be realized but only that the structure of being of the cloud is a transcendence toward rain. The possibility here is given as belonging to a particular being for which it is a power. This fact is sufficiently indicated by the way in which we say indifferently of a friend for whom we are waiting, "It is possible that he may come" or "He can come." Thus the possible can not be reduced to a subjective reality. Neither is it prior to the real or to the true. It is a concrete property of already existing realities. In order for the rain to be possible, there must be clouds in the sky. To suppress being in order to establish the possible in its purity is an absurd attempt. The frequently cited passage from not-being to being via possibility does not correspond to the real. To be sure, the possible state does not exist yet; but it is the possible state of a certain existent which sustains by its being the possibility and the non-being of its future state.

Certainly we are running the risk of letting these few remarks lead us to the Aristotelian "potentiality." This would be to fall from Charybdis to Scylla, to avoid the purely logical conception of possibility only to fall into a magical conception. Being-in-itself can not "be potentiality" or "have potentialities." In itself it is what it is—in the absolute plenitude of its identity. The cloud is not "potential rain;" it is, in itself, a certain quantity of water vapor, which at a given temperature and under a given pressure is strictly what it is. The in-itself is actuality. But we can conceive clearly enough how the scientific attitude in its attempt to dehumanize the world has encountered possibilities as *potentialities* and has got rid of them by making of them the pure subjective results of our logical calculation and of our ignorance. The first scientific step is correct; the possible comes into the world through human reality. These clouds can change into rain only if I surpass them towards the rain, just as the crescent moon lacks a portion of the disc only if I surpass the crescent towards the full moon. But was it necessary afterwards to make of the possible a simple given of our psychic subjectivity? Just as there can be lack in the world only if it comes to the world through a being which is its own lack, so there can be possibility in the world only if it comes through a being which is for itself in its own possibility.

But to be exact, possibility can not in essence coincide with the pure thought of possibilities. In fact if possibility is not first given as an objective structure of beings or of a particular being, then thought, however we consider it, can not inclose the possible within it as its thought content. If we consider possibles in the heart of the divine understanding as the content of the divine thought, beheld they become purely and simply concrete representations. Let us admit as a pure hypothesis—although it is impossible to understand how this negative power could come to a being wholly positive—that God has the power to deny; i.e., to bring negative judgments to bear on his representations. Even so we can not under-

stand how he could transform these representations into possibles. At the very most the result of the negation would be to constitute them as "without real correspondent." But to say that the centaur does not exist is by no means to say that it is possible. Neither affirmation nor negation can confer the character of possibility on a representation. If it is claimed that this character can be given by a synthesis of negation and affirmation, still we must observe that a synthesis is not a sum and that it would be necessary to account for this synthesis as an organic totality provided with its own meaning and not in terms of the elements of which it is a synthesis. Similarly the pure subjective and negative attestation of our ignorance concerning the relation to the real of one of our ideas could not account for the character of possibility in this representation; it could only put us in a state of indifference with respect to the representation and could not confer on it that right over the real which is the fundamental structure of the possible. If it is pointed out that certain tendencies influence me to expect this in preference to that, we shall say that these tendencies, far from explaining transcendence, on the contrary presuppose it; they must already, as we have seen, exist as a lack. Furthermore if the possible is not given in some way, these tendencies will be able to inspire us to hope that my representation may adequately correspond to reality but they will not be able to confer on me a right over the real. In a word the apprehension of the possible as such supposes an original surpassing. Every effort to establish the possible in terms of a subjectivity which would be what is—that is, which would close in upon itself—is on principle doomed to failure.

But it is true that the possible is—so to speak—an option on being, and if it is true that the possible can come into the world only through a being which is its own possibility, this implies for human reality the necessity of being its being in the form of an option on its being. There is possibility when instead of being purely and simply what I am, I exist as the Right to be what I am. But this very right separates me from what I have the right to be. Property right appears only when someone contests my property, when already in some respect it is no longer mine. The tranquil enjoyment of what I possess is a pure and simple fact, not a right. Thus if possibility is to exist, human reality as itself must necessarily be something other than itself. This possible is that element of the For-itself which by nature escapes it qua For-itself. The possible is a new aspect of the nihilation of the In-itself in For-itself.

If the possible can in fact come into the world only through a being which is its own possibility, this is because the in-itself, being by nature what it is, can not "have" possibilities. The relation of the in-itself to a possibility can be established only externally by a being which stands facing possibilities. The possibility of being stopped by a fold in the cloth belongs neither to the billiard ball which rolls nor to the cloth; it can arise

only in the organization into a system of the ball and the cloth by a being which has a comprehension of possibles. But since this comprehension can neither come to it from *without*—i.e., from the in-itself—nor be limited to being only a thought as the subjective mode of consciousness, it must coincide with the objective structure of the being which comprehends its possibles. To comprehend possibility qua possibility or to be its own possibles is one and the same necessity for the being such that in its being, its being is in question. But to be its own possibility—that is, to be defined by it—is precisely to be defined by that part of itself which it is not, is to be defined as an escape-from-itself towards —. In short, from the moment that I want to account for my immediate being simply in so far as it is what it is not and is not what it is, I am thrown outside it toward a meaning which is out of reach and which can in no way be confused with immanent subjective representation. Descartes apprehending himself by means of the *cogito* as *doubt* cannot hope to define this doubt as methodical doubt or even as doubt if he limits himself to what is apprehended by pure instantaneous observation. Doubt can be understood only in terms of the always open possibility that future evidence may “remove” it; it can be grasped as doubt only in so far as it refers to possibilities of the $\epsilon\pi\omicron\chi\eta$ ¹³ which are not yet realized but always open.

Strictly speaking, no fact of consciousness is *this* consciousness. Even if like Husserl we should quite artificially endow this consciousness with intra-structural protentions, these would have in them no way of surpassing the consciousness whose structure they are and hence would pitifully fall back on themselves—like flies bumping their noses on the window without being able to clear the glass. As soon as we wish to define a consciousness as doubt, perception, thirst, etc., we are referred to the nothingness of what is not yet. Consciousness (of) reading is not consciousness (of) reading this letter or this word or this sentence, or even this paragraph; it is consciousness (of) reading *this book*, which refers me to all the pages still unread, to all the pages already read, which by definition detaches consciousness from itself. A consciousness which would be consciousness of what it is, would be obliged to spell out each word.

Concretely, each *for-itself* is a lack of a certain coincidence with itself. This means that it is haunted by the presence of that with which it should coincide in order to be *itself*. But as this coincidence in Self is always coincidence with Self, the being which the For-itself lacks, the being which would make the For-itself a Self by assimilation with it—this being is still the For-itself. We have seen that the For-itself is a “presence to itself;” what this presence-to-itself lacks can fail to appear to it only as presence-to-itself. The determining relation of the for-itself to its possibility is a nihilating relaxation of the bond of presence-to-itself; this relax-

¹³ The French text is corrupt, reading $d'\chi\eta$. Obviously Sartre intended $\epsilon\pi\omicron\chi\eta$. Tr.

ation extends to transcendence since the presence-to-itself which the For-itself lacks is a presence-to-itself which is not. Thus the For-itself in so far as it is not itself is a presence-to-itself which lacks a certain presence-to-itself, and it is as a lack of this presence that it is presence-to-itself.

Every consciousness lacks *something for something*. But it must be understood that the lack does not come to it from without as in the case of the crescent moon as related to the full moon. The lack of the for-itself is a lack which it is. The outline of a presence-to-itself as that which is lacking to the for-itself is what constitutes the being of the for-itself as the foundation of its own nothingness. The possible is an absence constitutive of consciousness in so far as consciousness itself makes itself. Thirst—for example—is never sufficiently thirst inasmuch as it makes itself thirst; it is haunted by the presence of the Self of Thirst-itself. But in so far as it is haunted by this concrete value, it puts itself in question in its being as lacking a certain For-itself which would realize it as *satisfied thirst* and which would confer on it being-in-itself. This lacking For-itself is the Possible. Actually it is not exact to say that a Thirst tends toward its own annihilation as thirst; there is no consciousness which aims at its own suppression as such. Yet thirst is a lack, as we pointed out earlier. As such it wishes to be satisfied; but this satisfied thirst, which would be realized by synthetic assimilation in an act of coincidence of the For-itself-desire or Thirst with the For-itself-reflection or act of drinking, is not aimed at as the suppression of the thirst. Quite the contrary the aim is the thirst passed on to the plenitude of being, the thirst which grasps and incorporates repletion into itself as the Aristotelian form grasps and transforms matter; it becomes eternal thirst.

This point of view is very late and reflective—like that of the man who drinks to get rid of his thirst, like that of the man who goes to brothels to get rid of his sexual desire. Thirst, sexual desire, in the unreflective and naive state want to enjoy themselves; they seek that coincidence with self which is satisfaction, where thirst knows itself as thirst at the same time that the drinking satisfies it, when by the very fact of its fulfillment it loses its character as lack while making itself be thirst in and through the satisfaction. Thus Epicurus is right and wrong at the same time; in itself indeed desire is an emptiness. But no non-reflective project aims simply at suppressing this void. Desire by itself tends to perpetuate itself; man clings ferociously to his desires. What desire wishes to be is a filled emptiness but one which shapes its repletion as a mould shapes the bronze which has been poured inside it. The possible of the consciousness of thirst is the consciousness of drinking. We know moreover that coincidence with the self is impossible, for the for-itself attained by the realization of the Possible will make itself be as for-itself—that is, with another horizon of possibilities. Hence the constant disappointment which accompanies repletion, the famous: “Is it only this?” which is not directed

at the concrete pleasure which satisfaction gives but at the evanescence of the coincidence with self. Thereby we catch a glimpse of the origin of temporality since thirst is its possible at the same time that it is not its possible. This nothingness which separates human reality from itself is at the origin of time. But we shall come back to this. What must be noted here is that the For-itself is separated from the Presence-to-itself which it lacks and which is its own possibility, in one sense separated by Nothing and in another sense by the totality of the existent in the world, inasmuch as the For-itself, lacking or possible, is For-itself as a presence to a certain state of the world. In this sense the being beyond which the For-itself projects the coincidence with itself is the world or distance of infinite being beyond which man must be reunited with his possible. We shall use the expression *Circuit of selfness* (*Circuit de ipséité*) for the relation of the for-itself with the possible which it is, and "world" for the totality of being in so far as it is traversed by the circuit of selfness.

We are now in a position to elucidate the mode of being of the possible. The possible is the something which the For-itself lacks in order to be itself. Consequently it is not appropriate to say that it is qua possible—unless by being we are to understand the being of an existent which "is made-to-be" in so far as it is made-not-to-be, or if you prefer, the appearance at a distance of what I am. The possible does not exist as a pure representation, not even as a denied one, but as a real lack of being which, qua lack, is beyond being. It has the being of a lack and as lack, it lacks being. The Possible is not, the possible is possibilized to the exact degree that the For-itself makes itself be; the possible determines in schematic outline a location in the nothingness which the For-itself is beyond itself. Naturally it is not at first thematically posited; it is outlined beyond the world and gives my present perception its meaning as this is apprehended in the world in the circuit of selfness. But neither is the Possible ignored or unconscious; it outlines the limits of the non-thetic self-consciousness as a non-thetic consciousness. The non-reflective consciousness (of) thirst is apprehended by means of the glass of water as desirable, without putting the Self in the centripetal position as the end of the desire. But the possible repletion appears as a non-positional correlate of the non-thetic self-consciousness on the horizon of the glass-in-the-midst-of-the-world.

V. THE SELF AND THE CIRCUIT OF SELFNESS

In an article in *Recherches Philosophiques* I attempted to show that the Ego does not belong to the domain of the for-itself.¹⁴ I shall not repeat here. Let us note only the reason for the transcendence of the Ego: as a

¹⁴ The article to which Sartre refers is "La transcendance de l'ego, esquisse d'une description phénoménologique," *Recherches Philosophiques* 6:1936-1937. pp. 85-123. Tr.

unifying pole of *Erlebnisse* the Ego is in-itself, not for-itself. If it were of the nature of consciousness, in fact, it would be to itself its own foundation in the translucency of the immediate. But then we would have to say that is it what it is not and that it is not what it is, and this is by no means the mode of being of the "I." In fact the consciousness which I have of the "I" never exhausts it, and consciousness is not what causes it to come into existence; the "I" is always given as having been there before consciousness—and at the same time as possessing depths which have to be revealed gradually. Thus the Ego appears to consciousness as a transcendent in-itself, as an existent in the human world, not as of the nature of consciousness.

Yet we need not conclude that the for-itself is a pure and simple "impersonal" contemplation. But the Ego is far from being the personalizing pole of a consciousness which without it would remain in the impersonal stage; on the contrary, it is consciousness in its fundamental selfness which under certain conditions allows the appearance of the Ego as the transcendent phenomenon of that selfness. As we have seen, it is actually impossible to say of the in-itself that it is *itself*. It simply is. In this sense, some will say that the "I," which they wrongly hold to be the inhabitant of consciousness, is the "Me" of consciousness but not its own *self*. Thus through hypostasizing the being of the for-itself which is reflected-on and making it into an in-itself, these writers fix and destroy the movement of reflection upon the self; consciousness then would be a pure return to the Ego as to its *self*, but the Ego no longer refers to anything. The reflexive relation has been transformed into a simple centripetal relation, the center moreover, being a nucleus of opacity. We, on the contrary, have shown that the *self* on principle can not inhabit consciousness. It is, if you like, the reason for the infinite movement by which the reflection refers to the reflecting and this again to the reflection; by definition it is an ideal, a limit. What makes it arise as a limit is the nihilating reality of the presence of being to being within the unity of being as a type of being. Thus from its first arising, consciousness by the pure nihilating movement of reflection makes itself *personal*; for what confers personal existence on a being is not the possession of an Ego—which is only the *sign* of the personality—but it is the fact that the being exists for itself as a presence to itself.

Now this first reflective movement involves in addition a second or selfness. In selfness my possible is reflected on my consciousness and determines it as what it is. Selfness represents a degree of nihilation carried further than the pure presence to itself of the pre-reflective *cogito*—in the sense that the possible which I am is not pure presence to the for-itself as reflection to reflecting, but that it is *absent-presence*. Due to this fact the existence of *reference* as a structure of being in the for-itself is still more clearly marked. The for-itself is itself *down there*,

beyond its grasp, in the far reaches of its possibilities. This free necessity of being—down there—what one is in the form of lack constitutes selfness or the second aspect of the person. In fact how can the person be defined if not as a free relation to himself?

As for the world—i.e., the totality of beings as they exist within the compass of the circuit of selfness—this can be only what human reality surpasses toward itself. To borrow Heidegger's definition, the world is "that in terms of which human reality makes known to itself what it is."¹⁵ The possible which is my possible is a possible for-itself and as such a presence to the in-itself as consciousness of the in-itself. What I seek in the face of the world is the coincidence with a for-itself which I am and which is consciousness of the world. But this possible which is non-thetically an absent-present to present consciousness is not present as an object of a positional consciousness, for in that case it would be reflected-on. The satisfied thirst which haunts my actual thirst is not consciousness (of) thirst as a satisfied thirst; it is a thetic consciousness of *itself-drinking-from-a-glass* and a non-positional self-consciousness. It then causes itself to be transcended toward the glass of which it is conscious; and as a correlate of this possible non-thetic consciousness, the glass-drunk-from haunts the full glass as its possible and constitutes it as a glass to be drunk from. Thus the world by nature is mine in so far as it is the correlative in-itself of nothingness; that is, of the necessary obstacle beyond which I find myself as that which I am in the form "of having to be it." Without the world there is no selfness, no person; without selfness, without the person, there is no world. But the world's belonging to the person is never posited on the level of the pre-reflective cogito. It would be absurd to say that the world as it is known is known as mine. Yet this quality of "my-ness" in the world is a fugitive structure, always present, a structure which I live. The world (*is*) mine because it is haunted by possibles, and the consciousness of each of these is a possible self-consciousness which I am; it is these possibles as such which give the world its unity and its meaning as the world.

The examination of negating conduct and of bad faith has enabled us to approach the ontological study of the cogito, and the being of the cogito has appeared to us as being-for-itself. This being, under our observation, has been transcended toward value and possibilities; we have not been able to keep it within the substantial limits of the instantaneity of the Cartesian cogito. But precisely for this reason, we can not be content with the results which we have just obtained. If the cogito refuses instantaneity and if it is transcended toward its possibles, this can happen only within a temporal surpassing. It is "in time" that the for-itself is its own possibilities in the mode of "not being"; it is in time that my possi-

¹⁵ We shall see in Chapter III of this Part to what extent this definition—which we adopt provisionally—is insufficient and erroneous.

bilities appear on the horizon of the world which they make mine. If, then, human reality is itself apprehended as temporal, and if the meaning of its transcendence is its temporality, we can not hope to elucidate the being of the for-itself until we have described and determined the significance of the Temporal. Only then shall we be able to approach the study of the problem which concerns us: that of the original relation of consciousness to being.

CHAPTER TWO

Temporality

I. PHENOMENOLOGY OF THE THREE TEMPORAL DIMENSIONS

TEMPORALITY is evidently an organized structure. The three so-called "elements" of time, past, present, and future, should not be considered as a collection of "givens" for us to sum up—for example, as an infinite series of "nows" in which some are not yet and others are no longer—but rather as the structured moments of an original synthesis. Otherwise we will immediately meet with this paradox: the past is no longer; the future is not yet; as for the instantaneous present, everyone knows that this does not exist at all but is the limit of an infinite division, like a point without dimension. Thus the whole series is annihilated and doubly so since the future "now," for example, is a nothingness qua future and will be realized in nothingness when it passes on to the state of a present "now." The only possible method by which to study temporality is to approach it as a totality which dominates its secondary structures and which confers on them their meaning. We will never lose sight of this fact. Nevertheless we can not launch into an examination of the being of Time without a preliminary clarification of the too often obscure meaning of the three dimensions by means of pre-ontological, phenomenological description. We must, however, consider this phenomenological description as merely a provisional work whose goal is only to enable us to attain an intuition of temporality as a whole. In particular our description must enable us to see each dimension appear on the foundation of temporal totality without our ever forgetting the *Unselbständigkeit* of that dimension.

A. THE PAST

EVERY theory concerning memory implies the presupposition of the being of the past. These presuppositions, which have never been elucidated,

have obscured the problem of memory and that of temporality in general. Once and for all we must raise the question: what is *the being* of a past being? Common opinion vacillates between two equally vague conceptions. The past, it is said, is no longer. From this point of view it seems that being is to be attributed to the present alone. This ontological presupposition has engendered the famous theory of cerebral impressions. Since the past is no more, since it has melted away into nothingness, if the memory continues to exist, it must be by virtue of a present modification of our being; for example, this will be an imprint at present stamped on a group of cerebral cells. Thus everything is present: the body, the present perception, and the past as a present impression in the body—all is actuality; for the impression does not have a virtual existence *qua* memory; it is altogether an actual impression. If the memory is reborn, it is in the present as the result of a present process, as a rupture in the protoplasmic equilibrium in the cellular group under consideration. Psycho-physiological parallelism, which is instantaneous and extra-temporal, is there to explain how this physiological process is the correlate of a phenomenon strictly psychic but equally present—the appearance of the memory-image in consciousness. The more recent idea of an *engram* adds nothing except that it cloaks the theory in a pseudo-scientific terminology.

But if everything is present, how are we to explain the passivity of the memory; that is, the fact that in its intention a consciousness which remembers transcends the present in order to aim at the event back there where it was. I have shown elsewhere that there is no way of distinguishing the image from perception if we begin by making the image a renascent perception.¹ We shall meet the same impossibilities here. But in addition we thus remove the method of distinguishing the memory from the image; neither the “feebleness” of the memory, nor its pallor, nor its incompleteness, nor the contradictions it shows with the givens of perception can distinguish it from a fiction-image since it offers the same characteristics.

Furthermore since these characteristics are present qualities of the memory, they can not enable us to get out of the present in order to direct ourselves toward the past. In vain will we invoke the memory’s quality of belonging to me—its “*myness*,” following Claparède, or its “*intimacy*,” according to James. Either these characteristics manifest only a present atmosphere which envelops the memory—and then they remain present and refer to the present, or else they are already a relation to the past as such—and then they presuppose what they must explain. Some scholars have believed they might easily get rid of the problem by reducing memory to an implied pattern of localization and this to an ensemble of intellectual operations facilitated by the existence of “social contexts of memory.” No doubt these operations exist and ought to be

¹ *L’Imagination*. Alcan, 1936.

the object of psychological investigation. But if the relation to the past is not given in some manner, these operations can not create it. In a word, if we begin by isolating man on the instantaneous island of his present, and if all his modes of being as soon as they appear are destined by nature to a perpetual present, we have radically removed all methods of understanding his original relation to the past. We shall not succeed in constituting the dimension "past" out of elements borrowed exclusively from the present any more than "geneticists" have succeeded in constituting extension from unextended elements.

Popular consciousness has so much trouble in refusing a real existence to the past that alongside the thesis just discussed it admits another conception equally unprecise, according to which the past would have a kind of honorary existence. Being past for an event would mean simply being retired, losing its efficacy without losing its being. Bergson's philosophy has made use of this idea: on going into the past an event does not cease to be; it merely ceases to act and remains "in its place" at its date for eternity. In this way being has been restored to the past, and it is very well done; we even affirm that duration is a multiplicity of interpenetration and that the past is continually organized with the present. But for all that we have not provided any reason for this organization and this interpenetration; we have not explained how the past can "be reborn" to haunt us, in short to exist for us. If it is unconscious, as Bergson claims, and if the unconscious is inactive, how can it weave itself into the woof of our present consciousness? Would it have a force of its own? But then isn't this force present since it acts on the present? How does it emanate from the past as such? Shall we reverse the question, as Husserl does, and show in the present consciousness a game of "retentions," which latch on to the consciousnesses of yesteryear, maintain them at their date, and prevent them from being annihilated? But if Husserl's *cogito* is first given as instantaneous; there is no way to get outside it. We saw in the preceding chapter how protentions² batter in vain on the window-panes of the present without shattering them. The same goes for retentions. Husserl for the length of his philosophical career was haunted by the idea of transcendence and surpassing. But the philosophical techniques at his disposal, in particular his idealist conception of existence, removed from him any way of accounting for that transcendence; his intentionality is only the caricature of it. Consciousness, as Husserl conceived it, can not in reality transcend itself either toward the world or toward the future or toward the past.

Thus we have gained nothing by conceding being to the past, for by the terms of this concession, the past must be for us as not-being. Whether the past is, as Bergson and Husserl claim, or is not any longer, as Descartes

² "Protention" is a forward dimension of consciousness, the opposite of "retention."
Tr.

claims, is hardly of any importance if we are to begin by cutting down all bridges between it and our present.

In fact if we confer a privilege on the present by making it "a presence in the world" we must then attack the problem of the past in the perspective of intra-mundane being. People consider that we exist first as contemporary with this chair or this table, and they work out the meaning of the temporal by means of the world. But if we thus place ourselves in the midst of the world, we lose all possibility of distinguishing what no longer is from what is not. Someone may object that what no longer is must at least have been, whereas what is not has no connection of any kind with being. That is true. But the law of being of the intra-mundane instant, as we have seen, can be expressed by the simple words, "Being is," which indicate a massive plenitude of positivities where nothing which is not can be represented in any way whatsoever, not even by an impression, an emptiness, an appeal, or an "hysteresis." Being which is wholly exhausts itself in being; it has nothing to do with what is not, or with what is no longer. No negation, whether radical or subdued in a "no longer," can find a place in this absolute density. Hence the past can exist in its own way, but the bridges are cut. Being has not even "forgotten" its past, for forgetting would still be a form of connection. The past has slipped away from it like a dream.

Descartes' concept and Bergson's can be dismissed side by side because they are both subject to the same objection. Whether it be a question of annihilating the past or of preserving for it the existence of a household god, these authors have considered its condition apart, isolating it from the present. Whatever may be their concept of consciousness, they have conferred on it the existence of the in-itself; they have considered it as being what it is. There is no reason to wonder afterwards that they fail to reconnect the past to the present, for the present thus conceived will reject the past with all its strength. If they had considered the temporal phenomenon in its totality, they would have seen that "my" past is first of all *mine*; that is, that it exists as the function of a certain being which I am. The past is not *nothing*; neither is it the present; but at its very source it is bound to a certain present and to a certain future, to both of which it belongs. That "myness" of which Claparède speaks is not a subjective nuance which comes to shatter the memory; it is an ontological relation which unites the past to the present. My past never appears isolated in its "pastness;" it would be absurd even to imagine that it can exist as such. It is originally the past of *this* present. It is as such that it must be first elucidated.

I write that Paul in 1920 was a student at the Polytechnic School. Who is it who "was?" Paul evidently, but what Paul? The young man of 1920? But the only tense of the verb "to be" which suits Paul considered in 1920—so far as the quality of being a Polytechnic student is attributed

to him—is the present. In so far as he was, we must say of him—“He is.” If it is a Paul now become past who was a student at the Polytechnic School, all connection with the present is broken: the man who sustained that qualification, the subject, has remained back there with his attribute in 1920. If we want remembering to remain possible, we must on this hypothesis admit a recollecting synthesis which stems from the present in order to maintain the contact with the past. This is a synthesis impossible to conceive if it is not a mode of original being. Failing such a synthesis, we will have to abandon the past to its superb isolation. Moreover what would such a division in the personality signify? Proust, of course, admits the successive plurality of the Selves but this concept, if we take it literally, makes us fall into those insurmountable difficulties which in their time the Association School came up against.

Someone perhaps will suggest the hypothesis of a permanence in change: the one who was a pupil at the Polytechnic is this same Paul who existed in 1920 and who exists at present. It is he then of whom, after having said, “He is a pupil at Polytechnic,” we say at present, “He is a former student at the Polytechnic.” But this resort to permanence can not get us out of our difficulty. If nothing comes to turn the flow of the “nows” backward and so constitute the temporal series and permanent characteristics within this series, then permanence is nothing but a certain instantaneous content without even the density of each individual “now.” It is necessary that there be a past, and consequently something or someone who was this past, in order for there to be permanence. Far from helping to constitute time, permanence presupposes it in order to reveal itself and to reveal change along with it.

We return then to what we caught a glimpse of earlier. If the existential remanence of being in the form of the past does not arise originally from my actual present, if my past of yesterday does not exist as a transcendence behind my present of today, we have lost all hope of reconnecting the past with the present. If then I say of Paul that he was once or that he was for a continued period a student at the Polytechnic, I am speaking of this same Paul who is at the present time and concerning whom I say also that he is now forty years old. It is not the adolescent who was at the Polytechnic. Concerning the latter, for so long as he was, we have to say: he is. It is the forty-year old who was the student. Actually the thirty-year old was the student also. But again what would this man of thirty years be without the man of forty who was he? It is at the extreme limit of his present that this man of forty “was” a student at the Polytechnic. Finally it is the very being of the *Erlebnis* which has the task of being a man of forty, a man of thirty, and an adolescent—all in the mode of *having been*. Concerning this *Erlebnis*, we say today that it is; we say also of the man of forty and of the adolescent in their time that they are; today they form a part of the past, and the past itself is in the sense that at pres-

ent it is the past of Paul or of this *Erlebnis*. Thus the particular tenses of the perfect indicate beings who all really exist although in diverse modes of being, but of which the one is and at the same time was the other. The past is characterized as the past of something or of somebody; one has a past. It is this instrument, this society, this man who have their past. There is not first a universal past which would later be particularized in concrete pasts. On the contrary, it is particular pasts which we discover first. The true problem—which we shall attack in the following chapter—will be to find out by what process these individual pasts can be united so as to form the past.

Someone may object perhaps that we have weighted the scale by choosing an example in which the subject who “was” still exists in the present. We will cite other cases. For example, I can say of Pierre, who is dead: “He loved music.” In this case, the subject like the attribute is past. There is no living Pierre in terms of which this past-being can arise. But we conceive of such a subject. We conceive of him even to the point of recognizing that for Pierre the taste for music has never been past. Pierre has always been contemporary with this taste, which was his taste; his living personality has not survived it, nor has it survived the personality. Consequently here what is past is Pierre-loving-music. And I can pose the question which I raised earlier: of whom is this past Pierre the past? It can not be in relation to a universal Present which is a pure affirmation of being; it is then the past of my actuality. And in fact Pierre has been for-me, and I have been for-him. As we shall see, Pierre’s existence has touched my inmost depths; it formed a part of a present “in-the-world, for-me and for-others” which was my present during Pierre’s lifetime—a present which I have been. Thus concrete objects which have disappeared are past in so far as they form a part of the concrete past of a survivor. “The terrible thing about Death,” said Malraux, “is that it transforms life into Destiny.” By this we must understand that death reduces the for-itself-for-others to the state of simple for-others. Today I alone am responsible for the being of the dead Pierre, I in my freedom. Those dead who have not been able to be saved and transported to the boundaries of the concrete past of a survivor are not past; they along with their pasts are annihilated.

There are then beings which “have” pasts. Just now we referred indifferently to an instrument, a society, a man. Was this right? Can we at the outset attribute a past to all finite existents or only to certain categories among them? This can be more easily determined if we examine more closely this very particular notion—“to have” a past. One cannot “have” a past as one “has” an automobile or a racing stable. That is, the past can not be possessed by a present being which remains strictly external to it as I remain, for example, external to my fountain pen. In short, in the sense that possession ordinarily expresses an external relation of the possessor

to the possessed, the expression of possession is inadequate. External relations would hide an impassable abyss between a past and a present which would then be two factual givens without real communication. Even the absolute interpenetration of the present by the past, as Bergson conceives it, does not resolve the difficulty because this interpenetration, which is the organization of the past with the present, comes ultimately from the past itself and is only a relation of *habitation*. The past can indeed be conceived as being in the present, but by making it such we have removed all ways of presenting this immanence other than like that of a stone at the bottom of the river. The past indeed can haunt the present but it can not be the present; it is the present which is its past.

Therefore if we study the relations of the past to the present in terms of the past, we shall never establish *internal* relations between them. Consequently an in-itself, whose present is what it is, can not "have" a past. The examples cited by Chevallier in support of his thesis, and in particular the facts of hysteresis, do not allow us to establish any action by the past of matter upon its present state. There is no one of these examples, in fact, which can not be explained by the ordinary means of mechanistic determinism. Of these two nails, Chevallier tells us, the one has just been made and has never been used, the other has been bent, then straightened by strokes of the hammer; they appear absolutely similar. Yet at the first blow the one will sink straight into the wall, and the other will be bent again; this is the action of the past. According to our view, a little bad faith is needed in order to see the action of the past in this example. In place of this unintelligible explanation in terms of being which here is density, we may easily substitute the only possible explanation: the external appearances of these nails are similar, but their present molecular structures perceptibly differ. The present molecular state is at each instant the strict result of the prior molecular state, which for the scientist certainly does not mean that there is a "passage" from one instant to the next within the permanence of the past but merely an irreversible relation between the contents of two instants of physical time. Similarly, to offer as proof of this permanence of the past the remanence of magnetization in a piece of soft iron is not to prove anything worthwhile. Here we are dealing with a phenomenon which outlives its cause, not with a subsistence of the cause *qua* cause in the past state. For a long time after the stone which pierced the water has fallen to the bottom of the sea, concentric waves still pass over its surface; here nobody makes an appeal to some sort of action by the past to explain this phenomenon; the mechanism of it is almost visible. It does not seem that the facts of hysteresis or of remanence need any explanation of a different type.

In fact it is very clear that the expression "to have a past," which leads us to suppose a mode of possession in which the possessor can be passive and which as such can without violence be applied to matter,

should be replaced by the expression "to be" its own past. There is a past only for a present which cannot exist without being its past—back there, behind itself; that is, only those beings have a past which are such that in their being, their past being is in question, those beings who *have to be* their past. These observations enable us to refuse a priori to grant a past to the in-itself (which does not mean, however, that we must confine it within the present). We shall not thus settle once and for all the question of the past of *living beings*. We shall only observe that if it were necessary—which is by no means certain—to grant a past to life, this could be done only after having proved that the being of life is such that it allows a past. In short, it would be necessary first to prove that living matter is *something other* than a physical-chemical system. The opposite attempt—that of Chevallier—which consists in putting the strongest emphasis on the past as constitutive of originality in life, is an *ὑστερον πρότερον* completely void of meaning. For Human Reality alone the existence of a past is manifest because it has been established that human reality *has to be what it is*. It is through the for-itself that the past arrives in the world because its "I am" is in the form of an *I am me*.

What then is the meaning of "was"? We see first of all that it is transitive. If I say, "Paul is fatigued," one might perhaps argue that the copula has an ontological value, one might perhaps want to see there only an indication of inherence. But when we say, "Paul was fatigued," the essential meaning of the "was" leaps to our eyes: the present Paul is actually responsible for having had this fatigue in the past. If he were not sustaining this fatigue with his being, he would not even have forgotten that state; there would be rather a "no-longer-being" strictly identical with a "not-being." The fatigue would be lost. The present being therefore is the foundation of its own past; and it is the present's character as a foundation which the "was" manifests. But we are not to understand that the present founds the past in the mode of indifference and without being profoundly modified by it. "Was" means that the present being has to be in its being the foundation of its past while *being itself* this past. What does this mean? How can the present *be* the past?

The crux of the question lies evidently in the term "was," which, serving as intermediary between the present and the past, is itself neither wholly present nor wholly past. In fact it can be neither the one nor the other since in either case it would be contained inside the tense which would denote its being. The term "was" indicates the ontological leap from the present into the past and represents an original synthesis of these two temporal modes. What must we understand by this synthesis?

I see first that the term "was" is a mode of being. In this sense I *am* my past. I do not have it; I *am* it. A remark made by someone concerning an act which I performed yesterday or a mood which I had does not leave me indifferent; I *am* hurt or flattered, I protest or I let it pass; I *am* touched

to the quick. I do not dissociate myself from my past. Of course, in time I can attempt this dissociation; I can declare that "I am no longer what I was," argue that there has been a change, progress. But this is a matter of a secondary reaction which is given as such. To deny my solidarity of being with my past at this or that particular point is to affirm it for the whole of my life. At my limit, at that infinitesimal instant of my death, I shall be no more than my past. It alone will define me. This is what Sophocles wants to express in the *Trachiniae* when he has Deianeira say, "It is a proverb current for a long time among men that one cannot pass judgment on the life of mortals and say if it has been happy or unhappy, until their death." This is also the meaning of that sentence of Malraux' which we quoted earlier. "Death changes life into Destiny." Finally this is what strikes the Believer when he realizes with terror that at the moment of death the chips are down, there remains not a card to play. Death reunites us with ourselves. Eternity has changed us into ourselves. At the moment of death we are; that is, we are defenceless before the judgments of others. They can decide in *truth* what we are; ultimately we have no longer any chance of escape from what an all knowing intelligence could do. A last hour repentance is a desperate effort to crack all this being which has slowly congealed and solidified around us, a final leap to dissociate ourselves from what we are. In vain. Death fixes this leap along with the rest; it does no more than to enter into combination with what has preceded it, as one factor among others, as one particular determination which is understood only in terms of the totality. By death the for-itself is changed forever into an in-itself in that it has slipped entirely into the past. Thus the past is the ever growing totality of the in-itself which we are.

Nevertheless so long as we are not dead, we are not this in-itself in the mode of identity. We have to be it. Ordinarily a grudge against a man ceases with his death; this is because he has been reunited with his past; he is it without, however, being responsible for it. So long as he lives, he is the object of my grudge; that is, I reproach him for his past not only in so far as he is it but in so far as he reassumes it at each instant and sustains it in being, in so far as he is responsible for it. It is not true that the grudge fixes the man in what he was; otherwise it would survive death. It is addressed to the living man who in his being is freely what he was. I am my past and if I were not, my past would not exist any longer either for me or for anybody. It would no longer have any relation with the present. That certainly does not mean that it would not be but only that its being would be undiscoverable. I am the one by whom my past arrives in this world. But it must be understood that I do not give being to it. In other words it does not exist as "my" representation. It is not because I "represent" my past that it exists. But it is because I am my past that it enters into the world, and it is in terms of its being-

in-the-world that I can by applying a particular psychological process represent it to myself.

The past is what I have to be, and yet its nature is different from that of my possibles. The possible, which also I have to be, remains as my concrete possible, that whose opposite is equally possible—although to a less degree. The past, on the contrary, is that which is without possibility of any sort; it is that which has consumed its possibilities. I have to be that which no longer depends on my being-able-to-be, that which is already in itself all which it can be. The past which I am, I have to be with no possibility of not being it. I assume the total responsibility for it as if I could change it, and yet I can not be anything other than it. We shall see later that we continually preserve the possibility of changing the meaning of the past in so far as this is an ex-present which has had a future. But from the content of the past as such I can remove nothing, and I can add nothing to it. In other words the past which I was is what it is; it is an in-itself like the things in the world. The relation of being which I have to sustain with the past is a relation of the type of the in-itself—that is, an identification with itself.

On the other hand I am not my past. I am not it because I was it. The malice of others always surprises me and makes me indignant. How can they hate in the person who I am now that person who I was? The wisdom of antiquity has always insisted on this fact: I can make no pronouncement on myself which has not already become false at the moment when I pronounce it. Hegel did not disdain to employ this argument. Whatever I am doing, whatever I am saying—at the moment when I wish to be it, already I was doing it, I was saying it. But let us examine this aphorism more carefully. It amounts to saying that every judgment which I make concerning myself is already false when I make it; that is, that I have become something else. But what are we to understand by this something else? If we understand by it a mode of human reality which would enjoy the same existential type as that to which we refuse present existence, this amounts to declaring that we have committed an error in attributing a predicate to the subject and that there remains another predicate which could be attributed; it would only have been necessary to aim at it in the immediate future. In the same way a hunter who aims at a bird there where he sees it misses it because the bird is no longer at that place when the bullet arrives there. He will hit the bird if, on the contrary, he aims a little in advance at a point where the flying bird has not yet arrived. If the bird is no longer at this place, it is because it is already at another. At all events it is somewhere. But we shall see that this Eleatic concept of motion is profoundly erroneous; if we can say that the arrow is at A, B, etc., then motion really is a succession of points at rest. Similarly if we conceive that there has been an infinitesimal instant no longer existing at which I was what I already no longer am, then we are constituting the “me” out of

a series of fixed states which succeed each other like images from a magic lantern. If I am not what I pronounced myself to be, this is not because of a slight cleavage between judicative thought and being, not because of a retardation between the judgment and the fact, but because on principle in my immediate being in the presence of my present, I am not it. In short the reason why I am not what I was is not that there is a change, a becoming conceived as a passage to heterogeneity taking place in the homogeneity of being; on the contrary, a becoming is possible there only because on principle my being and my modes of being are heterogeneous.

The explanation of the world by means of becoming, conceived as a synthesis of being and of non-being, is easily given. But it must be noted that being in becoming could be this synthesis only if it were so to itself in an act which would establish its own nothingness. If already I am no longer what I was, it is still necessary that I have to be so in the unity of a nihilating synthesis which I myself sustain in being; otherwise I would have no relation of any sort with what I am no longer, and my full positivity would be exclusive of the non-being essential to becoming. Becoming can not be a given, a mode of immediate being for being; if we conceive of such a being, then being and non-being would be only juxtaposed in its heart, and no imposed or external structure could melt them into each other. The bond between being and non-being can be only internal. It is within being qua being that non-being must arise, and within non-being that being must spring up; and this relation can not be a fact, a natural law, but an upsurge of the being which is its own nothingness of being. If then I am not my own past, this can not be in the original mode of becoming; the truth is that *I have to be it in order not to be it and I have not to be it in order to be it*. This ought to clarify for us the nature of the mode "was": if I am not what I was, it is not because I have already changed, which would suppose a time already given, but because I am related to my being in the mode of an internal bond of *non-being*.

Thus it is in so far as I am my past that I can not-be it; it is even this very necessity of being my past which is the only possible foundation of the fact that I am not it. Otherwise at each instant, I should neither be it nor not be it save in the eyes of a strictly external witness who, moreover, would himself, have to be his past in the mode of *non-being*.

These remarks can show us that there is something inexact in that scepticism of Heraclitean origin which insists solely on the fact that I already no longer am what I say I am. Of course, no matter what someone says that I am, I am not it. But it is incorrect to affirm that I am *already* no longer it, for I have never been it if we mean here "being in itself." On the other hand, neither does it follow that I am making an error in saying that I am it, since it is very necessary that I be it in order not to be it: I am it in the mode of "was."

Thus whatever I can be said to be in the sense of being-in-itself with a

full, compact density (he is quick-tempered, he is a civil servant, he is dissatisfied) is always my past. It is in the past that I am what I am. But on the other hand, that heavy plenitude of being is behind me; there is an absolute distance which cuts it from me and makes it fall out of my reach, without contact, without connections. If I was happy or if I have been happy, that means that I am not happy. But it does not mean that I am unhappy, but simply that I can be happy only in the past. It is not because I have a past that I thus carry my being behind me; rather the past is precisely and only that ontological structure which obliges me to be what I am *from behind*. This is the meaning of the "was." By definition the for-itself exists with the obligation of assuming its being, and it can be nothing except for itself. It can assume its being only by a recovery of that being, which puts it at a distance from that being. By the very affirmation that I am in the mode of the in-itself, I escape that affirmation, for in its very nature it implies a negation. Thus the for-itself is always beyond that which it is by the very fact that it is it for-itself and that it has to be it. But at the same time the being which lives behind it is indeed its being, and not another being. Thus we understand the meaning of the "was," which merely characterizes the type of being of the for-itself—i.e., the relation of the for-itself to its being. The past is the in-itself which I am, but I am this in-itself as surpassed.

It remains for us to study the specific way in which the for-itself "was" its own past. Now we know that the for-itself appears in the original act by which the in-itself nihilates itself in order to found itself. The for-itself is its own foundation in so far as it makes itself the failure of the in-itself to be its own foundation. But for all that the for-itself has not succeeded in freeing itself from the in-itself. The surpassed in-itself lives on and haunts the for-itself as its original contingency. The for-itself can never reach the in-itself nor apprehend itself as being this or that, but neither can it prevent itself from being what it is—at a distance from itself. This contingency of the for-itself, this weight surpassed and preserved in the very surpassing—this is *Facticity*. But it is also the past. "Facticity" and "Past" are two words to indicate one and the same thing. The Past, in fact, like Facticity, is the invulnerable contingency of the in-itself which I have to be without any possibility of not being it. It is the inevitability of the necessity of fact, not by virtue of necessity but by virtue of fact. It is the being of fact, which can not determine the content of my motivations but which paralyzes them with its contingency because they can neither suppress it nor change it; it is what they necessarily carry with them in order to modify it, what they preserve in order to flee it, what they have to be in their very effort not to be it; it is that in terms of which they make themselves what they are. It is this being which is responsible for the fact that each instant I am not a diplomat or a sailor, that I am a professor, although I can only play this being as a role and although I can

never be united with it. If I can not reenter into the past, it is not because some magical power puts it beyond my reach but simply because it is in-itself and because I am for-myself. The past is what I am without being able to live it. The past is substance. In this sense the Cartesian cogito ought to be formulated rather: "I think; therefore I was."

What deceives us is the apparent homogeneity of the past and the present. For that shame which I experienced yesterday was part of the for-itself when I experienced it. We believe then that it has remained for-itself today; we wrongly conclude that if I can not reenter it, this is because it no longer exists. But we must reverse the relation in order to reach the truth. Between past and present there is an absolute heterogeneity; and if I can not enter the past, it is because the past is. The only way by which I could be it is for me myself to become in-itself in order to lose myself in it in the form of identification; this by definition is denied me. In fact that shame which I experienced yesterday and which was shame for itself is always shame in the present, and its essence can still be described as for-itself. But its being is no longer for itself since it no longer exists as reflection-reflecting. Though capable of description as for-itself, it simply is. The past is given as a for-itself become in-itself. That shame, so long as I live it, is not what it is. Now that I was it, I can say: it was shame. It has become what it was—behind me. It has the permanence and the constancy of the in-itself; it is at its date for eternity; it has the total adherence of the in-itself to itself.

In one sense then the past, which is at the same time for-itself and in-itself, resembles value or self, which we described in the preceding chapter; for it represents a certain synthesis of the being which is what it is not and is not what it is—with the being which is what it is. It is in this sense that we can speak of the evanescent value of the past. Hence arises the fact that memory presents to us the being which we were, accompanied by a plenitude of being which confers on it a sort of poetry. That grief which we had—although fixed in the past—does not cease to present the meaning of a for-itself, and yet it exists in itself with the silent fixity of the grief of another, of the grief of a statue. It no longer needs to appear before itself in order to make itself exist. On the contrary it is its character of for-itself; far from being the mode of being of its being, it becomes simply one way of being, a quality. Psychologists because they contemplated the psychic state in the past have claimed that consciousness was a quality which could affect the psychic state or not without modifying it in its being. The past psychic first is; and then it is for itself—just as Pierre is blond, as that tree is an oak.

But precisely for this reason the past which resembles value is not value. In value the for-itself becomes itself by surpassing and by founding its being; there is a recovery of the in-itself by the self. As a result, the contingency of being gives way to necessity. The past on the contrary is

at the start in-itself. The for-itself is sustained in being by the in-itself; its *raison d'être* is no longer being for-itself. It has become in-itself, and as a result it appears to us in its pure contingency. There is no reason for our past to be this or that; it appears in the totality of its series as the pure fact for which we must account *qua fact*, as the gratuitous. In short, it is value reversed—the for-itself recovered by the in-itself and fixed by it, penetrated and blinded by the full density of the in-itself, thickened by the in-itself to the point of no longer being able to exist as a reflection for the reflecting nor as the reflecting for the reflection, but simply as an in-itself indication of the dyad reflecting-reflection. This is why the past can, if need be, be the object aimed at by a for-itself which wants to realize value and flee the anguish which comes to it from the perpetual absence of the self. But in essence it is radically distinct from value; it is precisely the indicative from which no imperative can be deduced; it is the unique fact for each for-itself, the contingent and unalterable fact which I was.

Thus the Past is a For-itself reapprehended and inundated by the In-itself. How can this happen? We have described the meaning of *being-past* for an event and of *having a past* for a human reality. We have seen that the Past is an ontological law of the For-itself; that is, everything which can be a For-itself must be it back there behind itself, out of reach. It is in this sense that we can accept the statement of Hegel: "*Wesen ist was gewesen ist.*" My essence is in the past; the past is the law of its being. But we have not explained why a concrete event of the For-itself becomes past. How does a For-itself which was its past become the Past which a new For-itself has to be? The passage to the past is a modification of being. What is this modification? In order to understand this we must first apprehend the relation of the present For-itself to being. Thus as we might have foreseen, the study of the Past refers us to that of the Present.

B. THE PRESENT

IN contrast to the Past which is in-itself, the Present is for-itself. What is its being? There is a peculiar paradox in the Present: On the one hand, we willingly define it as *being*; what is present is—in contrast to the future which is not yet and to the past which is no longer. But on the other hand, a rigorous analysis which would attempt to rid the present of all which is not it—i.e., of the past and of the immediate future—would find that nothing remained but an infinitesimal instant. As Husserl remarks in his *Essays on the Inner Consciousness of Time*, the ideal limit of a division pushed to infinity is a nothingness. Thus each time that we approach the study of human reality from a new point of view we rediscover that indissoluble dyad, Being and Nothingness.

What is the fundamental meaning of the Present? It is clear that what

exists in the present is distinguished from all other existence by the characteristic of presence. At rollcall the soldier or the pupil replies "Present!" in the sense of *adsum*. Present is opposed to absent as well as to past. Thus the meaning of present is presence to —. It is appropriate then to ask ourselves to what the present is presence and *who* or *what* is present. That will doubtless enable us to elucidate subsequently the very being of the present.

My present is to be present. Present to what? To this table, to this room, to Paris, to the world, in short to being-in-itself. But can we say conversely that being-in-itself is present to me and to the being-in-itself which it is not? If that were so, the present would be a reciprocal relation of presences. But it is easy to see that it is nothing of the sort. Presence to — is an internal relation between the being which is present and the beings to which it is present. In any case it can not be a matter of a simple external relation of contiguity. Presence to — indicates existence outside oneself near to —. Anything which can be present to — must be such in its being that there is in it a relation of being with other beings. I can be present to this chair only if I am united to it in an ontological relation of synthesis, only if I am there in the being of the chair as *not being* the chair. A being which is present to — can not be at rest "in-itself;" the in-itself cannot be present any more than it can be Past. It simply is. There can be no question of any kind of simultaneity between one in-itself and another in-itself except from the point of view of a being which would be co-present with two in-itselfs and which would have in it the power of presence. The Present therefore can be only the presence of the For-itself to being-in-itself. And this presence can not be the effect of an accident, of a concomitance: on the contrary it is presupposed by all concomitance, and it must be an ontological structure of the For-itself. This table must be present to that chair in a world which human reality haunts as a presence. In other words one cannot conceive of a type of existent which would be *first* For-itself in order *subsequently* to be present to being. But the For-itself makes itself presence to being by making itself be For-itself, and it ceases to be presence by ceasing to be for-itself. The For-itself is defined as presence to being.

To what being does the For-itself make itself presence? The answer is clear: the For-itself is presence to all of being-in-itself. Or rather the presence of the For-itself is what makes being-in-itself exist as a totality. For by this very mode of presence to being qua being, every possibility is removed whereby the For-itself might be *more present* to one privileged being than to all other beings. Even though the facticity of its existence causes it to be *there* rather than elsewhere, being *there* is not the same as being present. *Being there* determines only the perspective by which presence to the totality of the in-itself is realized. By means of the *there* the For-itself causes beings to be for one and the same presence. Beings are

revealed as co-present in a world where the For-itself unites them with its own blood by that total ekstastic sacrifice of the self which is called presence. "Before" the sacrifice of the For-itself it would have been impossible to say that beings existed either together or separated. But the For-itself is the being by which the present enters into the world; the beings of the world are co-present, in fact, just in so far as one and the same for-itself is at the same time present to all of them. Thus for the in-itselfs what we ordinarily call Present is sharply distinguished from their being although it is *nothing* more than their being. For their Present means only their co-presence in so far as a For-itself is present to them.

We know now what is present and to what the present is present. But what is presence?

We have seen that this can not be the pure co-existence of two existents, conceived as a simple relation of exteriority, for that would require a third term to establish the co-existence. This third term exists in the case of the co-existence of things in the midst of the world; it is the For-itself which establishes this co-existence by making itself co-present to all. But in the case of the Presence of the For-itself to being-in-itself, there can not be a third term. No witness—not even God—could establish that presence; even the For-itself can know it only if the presence *already is*. Nevertheless presence can not be in the mode of the in-itself. This means that originally the For-itself is presence to being in so far as the For-itself is to itself its own witness of co-existence. How are we to understand this? We know that the For-itself is the being which exists in the form of a witness of its being. Now the For-itself is present to being if it is intentionally directed outside itself upon that being. And it must adhere to being as closely as is possible without identification. This adherence, as we shall see in the next chapter, is realistic, due to the fact that the For-itself realizes its birth in an original bond with being; it is a witness to itself of itself as *not being* that being. Due to this fact it is outside that being, upon being and within being as *not being* that being.

In addition we can deduce the following conclusions as to the meaning of Presence: Presence to a being implies that one is bound to that being by an internal bond; otherwise no connection between Present and being would be possible. But this internal bond is a negative bond and denies, as related to the present being, that one is the being to which one is present. If this were not so, the internal bond would dissolve into pure and simple identification. Thus the For-itself's Presence to being implies that the For-itself is a witness of itself in the presence of being as *not being* that being; presence to being is the presence of the For-itself in so far as the For-itself is *not*. For the negation rests not on a difference in mode of being which would distinguish the For-itself from being but on a difference of being. This can be expressed briefly by saying that the Present is *not*.

What is meant by this non-being of the Present and of the For-itself? To grasp this we must return to the For-itself, to its mode of existing, and outline briefly a description of its ontological relation to being. Concerning the For-itself as such we should never say, "It is" in the sense that we say, for example, "It is nine o'clock;" that is, in the sense of the total equivalence of being with itself which posits and suppresses the self and which gives the external aspect of passivity. For the For-itself has the existence of an appearance coupled with a witness of a reflection which refers to a reflecting without there being any object of which the reflection would be the reflection. The For-itself does not have being because its being is always at a distance: its being is there in the reflecting, if you consider appearance, which is appearance or reflection only for the reflecting; it is there in the reflection if you consider the reflecting, which is no longer in itself anything more than a pure function of reflecting *this* reflection. Furthermore in itself the For-itself is not being, for it makes itself be explicitly for-itself as not being being. It is consciousness of — as the internal negation of —. The structure at the basis of intentionality and of selfness is the negation, which is the *internal* relation of the For-itself to the thing. The For-itself constitutes itself outside in terms of the thing as the negation of that thing; thus its first relation with being-in-itself is negation. It "is" in the mode of the For-itself; that is, as a separated existent inasmuch as it reveals itself as not being being. It doubly escapes being, by an internal disintegration and by express negation. The present is precisely this negation of being, this escape from being inasmuch as being is *there* as that from which one escapes. The For-itself is present to being in the form of flight; the Present is a perpetual flight in the face of being. Thus we have precisely defined the fundamental meaning of the Present: the Present is *not*. The present instant emanates from a realistic and reifying conception of the For-itself; it is this conception which leads us to denote the For-itself according to the mode of that which is and that to which it is present—for example, of that hand on the face of the clock. In this sense it would be absurd to say that it is nine o'clock for the For-itself, but the For-itself can be present to a hand pointed at nine o'clock. What we falsely call the Present is the being to which the present is presence. It is impossible to grasp the Present in the form of an instant, for the instant would be the moment when the present is. But the present is not; it makes itself present in the form of flight.

But the present is not only the For-itself's non-being making itself present. As For-itself it has its being outside of it, before and behind. Behind, it was its past; and before, it *will* be its future. It is a flight outside of co-present being and from the being which it was toward the being which it will be. At present it is not what it is (past) and it is what it is not (future). Here then we are referred to the Future.

C. THE FUTURE

LET us note first that the in-itself can neither be future nor contain a part of the future. The full moon is future only when I regard this crescent moon as "in the world" which is revealed to human reality: it is only by human reality that the Future arrives in the world. In itself this quarter of the moon is what it is. Nothing in it is potentiality. It is actuality. The future, like the past, does not exist as a phenomenon of that original temporality of being-in-itself. The future of the in-itself, if it existed, would exist *in-itself*, cut off from being—like the past. Even if we should admit with Laplace a total determinism which allowed us to foresee a future state, still it would be necessary that this future circumstance be outlined on a preliminary revelation of the future as such, on a being-to-come of the world—or else time is an illusion and chronology disguises a strictly logical order of deducibility. If the future is pre-outlined on the horizon of the world, this can be only by a being which is its own future; that is, which is to-come for itself, whose being is constituted by a coming-to-itself of its own being. Here again we discover ekstastic structures analogous to those which we have described for the Past. Only a being which has to be its being instead of simply being it can have a future.

But what exactly is meant by "being its future?" And what type of being does the future possess? We must abandon at the start the idea that the future exists as representation.⁴ In the first place the future is seldom "represented." When it is, then as Heidegger says, it is thematized and ceases to be my future in order to become the indifferent object of my representation. Finally, if it were represented, it could not be the "content" of my representation, for content, if there were any, would have to be present. Someone may say that this present content will be animated by a "faturizing" intention. That does not make sense. Even if that intention existed, either it would itself of necessity be present—and then the problem of the future is not capable of any solution; or else the intention transcends the present in the future, and then the being of this intention is to-come, and it is necessary to recognize in the future a being different from the simple *percipi*. Moreover if the For-itself were limited within its present, how could it represent the future to itself? How could it have either knowledge of it or presentiment? No fabricated idea could furnish an equivalent for it. Once we have confined the Present to the Present, it is evident that we will never get out of it. It would be of no use to describe the Present as "pregnant with the future." Either this expression means nothing, or it denotes an actual efficacy in the present, or it indicates the law of being of the For-itself as that which is its future to itself—and in this last case it only points out what must be

⁴ i.e., in the imagination. Tr.

described and explained. The For-itself can not be "pregnant with the future" nor "expectant of the future," nor can it be "a knowledge of the future" except on the basis of an original and prejudicative relation of itself to itself. We can not conceive for the For-itself the slightest possibility of a thematic foresight, not even that of determined states in a scientific universe, unless it is the being which comes to itself in terms of the future, the being which makes itself exist as having its being outside itself in the future.

Let us take a simple example. This position which I quickly assume on the tennis court has meaning only through the movement which I shall make immediately afterward with my racket in order to return the ball over the net. But I am not obeying the "clear representation" of the future motion nor the "firm will" to accomplish it. Representations and volitions are idols invented by the psychologists. It is the future motion which, without even being thematically posited, hovers in the background of the positions which I adopt, so as to clarify them, to link them, and to modify them. At one throw, as I am there on the court and returning the ball, I exist first as a lack to myself, and the intermediary positions which I adopt are only ways of uniting myself with that future state so as to merge with it; each position has meaning only through that future state. There is in my consciousness no moment which is not similarly defined by an internal relation to a future; when I write, when I smoke, when I drink, when I rest, the meaning of my conscious states is always at a distance, down there, outside. In this sense Heidegger is right in saying that the *Dasein* is "always infinitely more than it would be if we limited it to its pure present." Better yet, this limitation would be impossible, for we would then be making the Present into an In-itself. Thus finality is rightly said to be causality reversed—that is, the efficacy of the future state. But too often people have forgotten to take this formula literally.

We must not understand by the future a "now" which is not yet. If we did so, we should fall back into the in-itself, and even worse we should have to envisage time as a given and static container. The future is what I have to be in so far as I can not be it. Let us recall that the For-itself makes itself present before being as not being this being and as having been its own being in the past. This presence is flight. We are not dealing here with a belated presence at rest near being but with an escape outside of being towards —. And this flight is two-fold, for in fleeing the being which it is not, Presence flees the being which it was. Toward what is it fleeing? We must not forget that in so far as it makes itself present to being in order to flee it the For-itself is a lack. The possible is that which the For-itself lacks in order to be itself or, if you prefer, the appearance of what I am—at a distance. Thus we grasp the meaning of the flight which is Presence; it is a flight toward its being; that is, toward the self which it will be by coincidence with what it lacks. The Future is the lack which

wrenches it as lack away from the in-itself of Presence. If Presence did not lack anything, it would fall back into being and would lose presence to being and acquire in exchange the isolation of complete identity. It is lack as such which permits it to be presence. Because Presence is outside of itself toward something lacking which is beyond the world, it can be outside itself as presence to an in-itself which it is not.

The Future is the determining being which the For-itself has to be beyond being. There is a Future because the For-itself has to be its being instead of simply being it. This being which the For-itself has to be can not be in the mode of the co-present in-itselfs; for in that case it would be without being made-to-be; we could not then imagine it as a completely defined state to which presence alone would be lacking, as Kant says that existence adds nothing more to the object of the concept. But this being would no longer be able to exist, for in that case the For-itself would be only a given. This being is because the For-itself makes itself be by perpetually apprehending itself for itself as unachieved in relation to it. It is this which at a distance haunts the dyad reflection-reflecting and which causes the reflection to be apprehended by the reflecting (and conversely) as a Not-yet. But it is necessary that this lacking be given in the unity of a single upsurge with the For-itself which lacks; otherwise there would be nothing in relation to which the For-itself might apprehend itself as not-yet. The Future is revealed to the For-itself as that which the For-itself is not yet, inasmuch as the For-itself constitutes itself non-thetically for itself as a not-yet in the perspective of this revelation, and inasmuch as it makes itself be as a project of itself outside the Present toward that which it is not yet. To be sure, the Future can not be without this revelation. This revelation itself requires being revealed to itself; that is, it requires the revelation of the For-itself to itself, for otherwise the ensemble revelation-revealed would fall into the unconscious—i.e., into the In-itself. Thus only a being which is its own revealed to itself—that is, whose being is in question for itself—can have a Future. But conversely such a being can be for itself only in the perspective of a Not-yet, for it apprehends itself as a nothingness—that is, as a being whose complement of being is at a distance from itself. At a distance means beyond being. Thus everything which the For-itself is beyond being is the Future.

What is the meaning of this "beyond?" In order to understand it we must note that the Future has one essential characteristic of the For-itself: it is presence (future) to being. And it is Presence of this particular For-itself, of the For-itself for which it is the future. When I say, "I shall be happy," it is this present For-itself which will be happy; it is the actual *Erlebnis* with all which it was and which it drags behind it. It will be happy as presence to being; that is, as future Presence of the For-itself to a co-future being. So that what has been given me as the meaning of the pres-

ent For-itself is ordinarily the co-future being in so far as it will be revealed to the future For-itself as that to which this For-itself will be present. For the For-itself is thethetic consciousness of the world in the form of presence and non-thetic self-consciousness. Thus what is ordinarily revealed to consciousness is the future world without consciousness' being aware that it is the world in so far as it will appear to a consciousness, the world in so far as it is posited as future by the presence of a For-itself to come. This world has meaning as future only in so far as I am present to it as *another* who I *will be*, in another position, physical, emotional, social, etc. Yet it is this which is at the end of my present For-itself and beyond being-in-itself, and this is the reason why we have a tendency first to present the future as a state of the world and to make it appear subsequently on the ground of the world. If I write, I am conscious of the words as written and as about to be written. The words alone seem to be the future which awaits me. But the very fact that they appear as *to be written* implies that writing, as a non-thetic self-consciousness, is the possibility which I am. Thus the Future as the future presence of a For-itself to a being drags being-in-itself along with it into the future. This being to which the For-itself will be present is the meaning of the in-itself co-present with the present For-itself, as the future is the meaning of the For-itself. The Future is presence to a co-future being because the For-itself can exist only outside itself at the side of being and because the future is a future For-itself. But thus through the Future a particular future arrives in the World; that is, the For-itself is its meaning as Presence to being which is beyond being. Through the For-itself, a Beyond of being is revealed next to which the For-itself has to be what it is. As the saying goes, "I must become what I was;" but I must become what I was—in a world that has become and in a world that has become *from the standpoint* of what it is. This means that I give to the world its own possibilities in terms of the state which I apprehend on it. Determinism appears on the ground of the futurizing project of myself. Thus the future will be distinguished from the imaginary, where similarly I am what I am not, where similarly I find my meaning in a being which I have to be but where this For-itself which I have to be emerges on the ground of the nihilation of the world, *apart from the world of being*.

But the Future is not solely the presence of the For-itself to a being situated beyond being. It is something which waits for the For-itself which I am. This something is myself. When I say that I will be happy, we understand that it is the present "I," dragging its Past after it, who will be happy. Thus the Future is "I" in as much as I await myself as presence to a being beyond being. I project myself toward the Future in order to merge there with that which I lack; that is, with that which if synthetically added to my Present would make me be what I am. Thus what the For-itself has to be as presence to being beyond being is its own possibil-

ity. The Future is the ideal point where the sudden infinite compression of facticity (Past), of the For-itself (Present), and of its possible (a particular Future) will at last cause the Self to arise as the existence in-itself of the For-itself. The project of the For-itself toward the future which it is is a project toward the In-itself. In this sense the For-itself has to be its future because it can be the foundation of what it is only before itself and beyond being. It is the very nature of the For-itself that it must be "an always future hollow." For this reason it will never have become, in the Present, what it had to be, in the Future. The entire future of the present For-itself falls into the Past as the future along with this For-itself itself. It will be the past future of a particular For-itself or a former future. This future is not realized. What is realized is a For-itself which is designated by the Future and which is constituted in connection with this future. For example, my final position on the tennis court has determined on the ground of the future all my intermediary positions, and finally it has been reunited with an ultimate position identical with what it was in the future as the meaning of my movements. But, precisely, this "reuniting" is purely ideal; it is not really operative. The future does not allow itself to be rejoined; it slides into the Past as a bygone future, and the Present For-itself in all its facticity is revealed as the foundation of its own nothingness and once again as the lack of a new future. Hence comes that ontological disillusion which awaits the For-itself at each emergence into the future. "Under the Empire how beautiful was the Republic!" Even if my present is strictly identical in its content with the future toward which I projected myself beyond being, it is not this present toward which I was projecting myself; for I was projecting myself toward the future qua future—that is, as the point of the reuniting of my being, as the place of the upsurge of the Self.

Now we are better able to raise the question of the being of the Future since this Future which I have to be is simply my *possibility* of presence to being beyond being. In this sense the Future is strictly opposed to the Past. The Past is, to be sure, the being which I am outside of myself, but it is the being which I am without the possibility of not being it. This is what we have defined as being its past *behind* itself. The being of the Future which I have to be, on the contrary, is such that I can *only* be it; for my freedom gnaws at its being from below. This means that the Future constitutes the meaning of my present For-itself, as the project of its possibility, but that it in no way predetermines my For-itself which is to-come, since the For-itself is always abandoned to the nihilating obligation of being the foundation of its nothingness. The Future can only effect a pre-outline of the limits within which the For-itself will make itself be as a flight making itself present to being in the direction of another future. The future is what I would be if I were not free and what I

can have to be only because I am free. It appears on the horizon to announce to me what I am from the standpoint of what I shall be. ("What are you doing? I am in the process of tacking up this tapestry, of hanging this picture on the wall"). Yet at the same time by its nature as a future present-for-itself, it is disarmed; for the For-itself which will be, will be in the mode of determining itself to be, and the Future, then become a past future as a pre-outline of this for-itself, will be able only as the past to influence it to be what it makes itself be. In a word, I am my Future in the constant perspective of the possibility of not being it. Hence that anguish which we have described above which springs from the fact that I am not sufficiently that Future which I have to be and which gives its meaning to my present: it is because I am a being whose meaning is always problematic. In vain would the For-itself long to be enchained to its Possibility, as to the being which it is outside itself but which it is surely outside itself. The For-itself can never be its Future except problematically, for it is separated from it by a Nothingness which it is. In short the For-itself is free, and its Freedom is to itself its own limit. To be free is to be condemned to be free. Thus the Future qua Future does not have to be. It is not *in itself*, and neither is it in the mode of being of the For-itself since it is the *meaning* of the For-itself. The Future is not, it is *possibilized*.

The Future is the continual possibilization of possibles—as the meaning of the present For-itself in so far as this meaning is problematic and as such radically escapes the present For-itself.

The Future thus defined does not correspond to a homogeneous and chronologically ordered succession of moments to come. To be sure, there is a hierarchy of my possibles. But this hierarchy does not correspond to the order of universal Temporality such as will be established on the bases of original Temporality. I am an infinity of possibilities, for the meaning of the For-itself is complex and cannot be contained in one formula. But a particular possibility may be more determinant for the meaning of the present For-itself than another which is nearer in universal time. For example, the possibility of going at two o'clock to see a friend whom I have not seen for two years—this is truly a possible which I am. But the nearer possibilities—the possibilities of going there in a taxi, by bus, by subway, on foot—all these at present remain underdetermined. I am not any one of these possibilities. Also there are gaps in the series of my possibilities. In the order of knowledge the gaps will be filled by the constitution of an homogeneous time without lacuna; in the order of action they will be filled by the will—that is, by rational, thematizing choice in terms of my possibles, and of possibilities which are not and will never be *my possibilities* and which I will realize in the mode of total indifference *in order to be reunited with a possible which I am*.

II. THE ONTOLOGY OF TEMPORALITY

A. STATIC TEMPORALITY

OUR phenomenological description of the three temporal ekstases should enable us at present to approach temporality as a total structure organizing within it secondary ekstastic structures. But this new study must be made from two different points of view.

Temporality is often considered as an indefinable. Everybody admits however that it is before all else a succession. And succession in turn can be defined as an order in which the ordering principle is the relation before-after. A multiplicity ordered in terms of before and after is a temporal multiplicity. It is appropriate therefore to begin by considering the constitution and the requirements of the terms *before* and *after*. This is what we shall call the *static* temporal since these notions of before and after can be considered in a strictly ordinal arrangement independent of change proper. But time is not only a fixed order for a determined multiplicity; observing temporality more closely we establish the fact of succession; that is, the fact that a particular after becomes a before, that the Present becomes past and the future a former-future. This may well be the subject of our second investigation under the name of the *dynamic* temporal. It is of course in the dynamic temporal that we will have to look for the secret of the static constitution of time. But it is preferable to divide up the difficulties. Indeed in a sense we can say that the static temporal can be considered separately as a certain formal structure of temporality—what Kant calls the order of time—and that the dynamic corresponds to the material flow or—using Kantian terminology—to the course of time. It will be to our advantage therefore to consider separately first this order and then this course.

The order “before-after” is defined first of all by irreversibility. We call such a series successive when we can consider the terms only one at a time and only in one direction. But precisely because the terms of the series are revealed *one at a time* and because each is exclusive of the others, some people have wanted to see in the *before* and the *after* forms of separation. Actually time does separate me, for example, from the realization of my desires. If I am obliged to wait for that realization, it is because it is located *after* other events. Without the succession of the “after,” I would be *immediately* what I wish to be; there would no longer be any distance between the present me and the later me, nor any separation between dream and action. Novelists and poets have insisted on time’s power to separate, and they have emphasized likewise an accompanying idea, which however springs from the dynamic temporal—that every “now” is destined to become a “formerly.” Time gnaws and wears away;

it separates; it flies. And by virtue of separation—by separating man from his pain or from the object of his pain—time cures.

"Let time do it," said the King to Don Roderigo. In general people have been struck with the necessity for all being to be divided up into an infinite dispersion of *afters* which succeed each other. Even the permanents, even this table, which remains invariable while I change, must spread out and refract its being in the temporal dispersion. Time separates me from myself, from what I have been, from what I wish to be, from what I wish to do, from things, and from others. It is time which is chosen as the practical measure of distance; this town is half an hour away, that one an hour; it will take three days to finish this work, etc. It results from these premises that a temporal vision of the world and of man will dissolve into a crumbling of *befores* and *afters*. The unity of this crumbling, the temporal atom, will be the *instant*, which has its place before certain determined instants and after other instants without admitting either before or after inside its own form. The instant is indivisible and non-temporal since temporality is succession, but the world dissolves into an infinite dust of instants. And it is a problem for Descartes, for example, to learn how there can be a passage from one instant to another instant; for the instants are juxtaposed—i.e., separated by *nothing* and yet without communication. Similarly Proust asks how his Self can pass from one instant to another; how, for example, he discovers after a night's sleep precisely the Self of the day before rather than some other one. More radically, the empiricists after having denied the permanence of the Self try in vain to establish a semblance of transversal unity across the instants of psychic life. Thus when we consider in isolation the dissolving power of temporality, we are forced to admit that the fact of having existed at a given instant does not constitute a right to exist at the following instant, not even a mortgage or option on the future. The problem is then to explain how there is a world—i.e., connected changes and permanences in time.

Yet temporality is not solely nor even primarily separation. We can account for this by considering more precisely the notion of *before* and *after*. A, let us say, is after B. Now we have established an express relation of order between A and B which supposes therefore their unification at the heart of this very order. Even if there had been no other relation between A and B than this, it would still be sufficient to assure their connection, for it would allow thought to go from one to the other and to unite them in a judgment of succession. If, then, time is separation, it is at least a separation of a special type—a division which reunites. So far so good, somebody will say, but this unifying relation is preeminently an external relation. When the Association School wanted to establish that the mind's impressions were held together only by purely external bonds, did they not finally reduce all associative connections to the relation of *before-after*, conceived as simple "contiguity"?

Of course. But has not Kant shown that the unity of experience and hence the unification of temporal change are required in order for the slightest bond of empirical association to be even conceivable? Let us consider the association theory more carefully. It is accompanied by a monistic conception to the effect that being is everywhere being-in-itself. Each impression on the mind is in itself what it is; it is isolated in its present plenitude and does not allow any trace of the future or any lack. Hume, when he issued his famous challenge, was concerned with establishing this law, which he claimed to derive from experience: one can at will examine any impression, strong or weak; one will never find anything in it but itself so that any connection with an antecedent or a consequent, no matter how constant it may be, remains unintelligible.

Let us suppose a temporal content A existing as a being in-itself and a temporal content B, posterior to the first and existing in the same mode—that is, in the self-inclusion of identity. It should be remarked first that this self-identity obliges them to exist each without any separation from itself, without even a temporal separation, whether in eternity or in the instant—and eternity and the instant are here equivalent since the instant, not being defined internally in connection with before-after, is non-temporal. One may ask how under these circumstances the state A can be prior to the state B. It would be of no use to reply that it is not states which are prior or post but the *instants* which contain them, for on this theory the instants are *in-itselfs*, like the states. But the priority of A over B supposes in the very nature of A (instant or state) an incompleteness which points toward B. If A is prior to B, then A receives this determination in B. Otherwise neither the upsurge nor the annihilation of B isolated in its instant can confer on A isolated in its instant the slightest particular quality. In a word, if A is to be prior to B, it must be, in its very being, in B as A's future. Conversely, B, if it is to be posterior to A must linger behind itself in A, which will confer on B its sense of posteriority. If then we grant *a priori* being in-itself to A and to B, it is impossible to establish between them the slightest connection of succession. That connection in fact would be a purely external relation and as such would necessarily hang in midair, deprived of any substratum, without power to get any hold on either A or B—in a sort of non-temporal nothingness.

There remains the possibility that this relation before-after can exist only for a witness who establishes it. The difficulty is that if this witness can be *simultaneously* in A and in B, it is because he is himself temporal, and the problem will be raised anew for him. Or rather, on the contrary, he can transcend time by a gift of temporal ubiquity which is equivalent to non-temporality. This is the solution at which both Descartes and Kant stopped. For them temporal unity, at the heart of which is revealed the synthetic relation before-after, is conferred on the multiplicity of instants

by a being who himself escapes temporality. Both of them start from the presupposition of a time which would be a form of division and which itself dissolves in pure multiplicity. Since the unity of time can not be furnished by time itself, both philosophers put an extra-temporal being in charge of it: God and his continuous creation with Descartes, the "I think" (*Ich denke*) and its forms of synthetic unity with Kant. For Descartes, time is unified by its material content, which is maintained in existence by a perpetual creation *ex nihilo*; for Kant, on the other hand the concepts of pure understanding apply to the very form of time. In both cases it is a temporal (God or "I") which is charged with providing the non-temporals (instants) with their temporality. Temporality becomes a simple external and abstract relation between non-temporal substances; there is an attempt to reconstruct it entirely with a-temporal materials.

It is evident that such a reconstruction, made first in opposition to time, can not later lead to the temporal. Either we will implicitly and surreptitiously temporalize the non-temporal; or else if we scrupulously preserve its non-temporality, time will become a pure human illusion, a dream. If time is real, then even God will have to "wait for the sugar to dissolve." He must be both down there in the future and yesterday in the past in order to effect the connection of moments, for it is necessary that he take hold of them there where they are. Thus his pseudo non-temporality hides other concepts—that of temporal infinity and that of temporal ubiquity. But these can have meaning only for a synthetic form of withdrawal from self which no longer corresponds to being in itself. If, on the contrary, we base, for example, the omniscience of God on his extra-temporality, then he does not have to wait till the sugar dissolves in order to see that it will dissolve. But then the necessity of waiting and consequently temporality can represent only an illusion resulting from human finitude; the chronological order is only the confused perception of an order which is logical and eternal. This argument can be applied without any modification to the Kantian "I think." It would be of no use to object, as Kant does, that time has a unity as such since it arises as an *a priori* form from the non-temporal; for the problem is not so much to account for the total unity of its upsurge as for the intra-temporal connections of before and after.

Someone may speak of a potential temporality which the unification causes to become actuality. But this potential succession is even less comprehensible than the real succession of which we spoke earlier. What is a succession which waits for unification in order to become a succession? To whom or what does it belong? Yet if it is not already given somewhere, how could the non-temporal secrete it without thereby losing all non-temporality; how could the succession even emanate from the non-temporal without shattering it? Moreover the very idea of unification is here

altogether incomprehensible. We have in fact supposed two in-itselfs isolated each at its own place and date. How can we unify them? Are we dealing with a *real* unification? In this case either we are merely playing with words—and the unification will have no hold on the two in-itselfs isolated in their respective self-identity and completeness; or else it will be necessary to constitute a unity of a new type—namely, ekstatic unity in which each state will be outside itself, down there in order to be before or after the other. But this would necessitate shattering their being, expanding it, in a word temporalizing it, and would not merely bring them together. But how will the non-temporal unity of the “I think” as the simple faculty of thought be capable of effecting this decompression of being? Shall we say that the unification is potential; that is, that beyond impressions we have projected a type of unity roughly comparable to Husserl’s *noema*? But how will a non-temporal which has to unite non-temporals conceive a unification of the type of the succession? And if as will then have to be admitted, the *esse* of time is a *percipi*, how is the *percipitur* constituted? In a word, how could a being with a-temporal structure apprehend as temporals (or intend as such) in-itselfs isolated in their non-temporality? Thus inasmuch as temporality is at once a form of separation and a form of synthesis, it does not allow itself either to be derived from a non-temporal or to be imposed *from without* upon non-temporals.

Leibniz in reaction against Descartes, and Bergson in reaction against Kant have in turn tried to see in temporality only a pure relation of immanence and cohesion. Leibniz considers that the problem of the passage from one instant to another and its solution, continuous creation, are a false problem and a useless solution. According to him Descartes forgot the continuity of time. By asserting the continuity of time, we forbid ourselves to conceive of time in the form of instants; and if there is no longer an instant, there is no longer any relation of before-after between instants. Time is a vast continuity of flow to which no original element existing in-itself may be assigned.

Leibniz has forgotten that before-after is also a form which separates. If time is a given continuity with an undeniable tendency to separate, one can raise Descartes’ question in another form: what is the origin of the cohesive power of continuity? Of course there are primary elements juxtaposed in a continuum. But this is precisely because there is *at the start* a unification. It is because I draw a straight line, as Kant says, that the straight line, realized in the unity of a single act, is something other than an infinite series of points. Who then *draws* time? In short this continuity is a fact which must be accounted for. It cannot be a solution. We may recall here the famous definition of Poincaré: a series *a, b, c*, is continuous when we can write *a-b, b-c, a-c*. This definition is excellent in that it gives us a foreshadowing of a type of being which is what it is not and

which is not what it is. By virtue of the axiom, $a=c$, by virtue of continuity itself, $a=c$. Thus a is and is not equivalent to c . And b , equal to a and equal to c is different from itself inasmuch as a is not equal to c . But this ingenious definition rests on a mere playing with words such as we confronted in the view of the in-itself. And while it furnishes us with a type of being which at the same time is and is not, it does not furnish us with either its principles or its foundation. Everything still remains to be done. In the study of temporality in particular, we realize well what service continuity can render us by putting in between the instant a and the instant c , no matter how close together they are, an intermediary b , such that, according to the formula $a=b$, $b=c$, $a=c$; in this case b is at once indistinguishable from a and indistinguishable from c , which are perfectly distinct one from the other. It is b which will realize the relation before-after, it is b which will be before itself inasmuch as it is indistinguishable from a and from c . All very good! But how can such a being exist? Whence comes its ekstastic nature? How does it happen that the division which is outlined in it is not achieved? Why does it not explode into two terms, one of which would dissolve into a and the other in c ? How can we fail to see that there is here a problem concerning its unity? Perhaps a deeper examination of the conditions of the possibilities of this being would have shown us that only the For-itself could thus exist in the ekstastic unity of self. But this examination has not been attempted, and temporal cohesion, with Leibniz, hides after all the cohesion through absolute immanence of logic—i.e., identity. But if the chronological order is continuous, it could not “symbolize” with the order of identity, for the continuous is not compatible with the identical.

Similarly Bergson with his duration, which is a melodic organization and multiplicity of interpenetration, does not appear to see that an organization of multiplicity presupposes an organizing act. He is right in contrast to Descartes when he suppresses the instant; but Kant was right rather than Bergson in claiming that there is no given synthesis. This Past of Bergson's, which clings to the present and even penetrates it, is scarcely more than a rhetorical figure. It shows well the difficulties which Bergson encountered in his theory of memory. For if the Past, as he maintains, is inactive, it can only remain behind and will never come to penetrate the present in the form of memory unless a present being has undertaken to exist as well ekstastically in the Past. Of course, with Bergson, it is indeed one and the same being which endures. But that makes one realize all the more the need for ontological elucidations. For we do not know finally if it is the being which endures or if it is duration which is being. And if duration is being, then Bergson must tell us what is the ontological structure of duration; and if, on the contrary, it is being which endures, he must show us what it is in being which permits it to endure.

What can we conclude as the result of this discussion? First of all this:

temporality is a dissolving force but it is at the center of a unifying act; it is less a real multiplicity—which could not subsequently receive any unity and which consequently would not even exist as a multiplicity—than a quasi-multiplicity, a foreshadowing of dissociation in the heart of unity. We need not try to consider either one of these two aspects separately. If we first posit temporal unity, we risk no longer being able to understand anything about irreversible succession as the meaning of this unity, and if we consider the disintegrating succession as the original character of time, we risk no longer being able to understand that there is one time. If then there is no priority of unity over multiplicity, nor of multiplicity over unity, it is necessary to conceive of temporality as a unity which multiplies itself; that is, temporality can be only a relation of being at the heart of this same being. We can not picture it as a container whose being would be given, for this would be to renounce forever the hope of understanding how this being in itself can be broken up into multiplicity or how the in-itself of the containing minima or instants can be reunited within the unity of one time. Temporality is not. Only a being of a certain structure of being can be temporal in the unity of its being. The before and after are intelligible, as we have observed, only as an internal relation. It is there in the after that the before causes itself to be determined as before and conversely. In short the before is intelligible only if it is the being which is before itself. This means that temporality can only indicate the mode of being of a being which is itself outside itself. Temporality must have the structure of selfness. Indeed it is only because the self in its being is there outside itself that it can be before or after itself, that there can be in general any before and after. Temporality exists only as the intra-structure of a being which has to be its own being; that is, as the intra-structure of a For-itself. Not that the For-itself has an ontological priority over temporality. But Temporality is the being of the For-itself in so far as the For-itself has to be its being ekstatically. Temporality is not, but the For-itself temporalizes itself by existing.

Conversely our phenomenological study of the Past, the Present, and the Future allows us to demonstrate that the For-itself can not be except in temporal form.

The For-itself rising into being as the nihilation of the In-itself constitutes itself simultaneously in all the possible dimensions of nihilation. From whatever point of view it is considered, it is the being which holds to itself by a single thread, or more precisely it is the being which by being causes all the possible dimensions of its nihilation to exist. In the ancient world the profound cohesion and dispersion of the Jewish people was designated by the term "Diaspora." It is this word which will serve to designate the mode of being of the For-itself; it is diasporatic. Being-in-itself has only one dimension of being, but the appearance of nothingness as that which is *made-to-be* at the heart of being complicates the existential.

structure by causing the appearance of the ontological mirage of the Self. We shall see later that reflection, transcendence, being-in-the-world, and being-for-others represent several dimensions of nihilation or, if you prefer, several original relations of being with the self. Thus nothingness introduces quasi-multiplicity into the heart of being. This quasi-multiplicity is the foundation of all intra-mundane multiplicities, for a multiplicity supposes an original unity at the heart of which the multiplicity is outlined. In this sense it is not true, as Myerson claims, that the diverse creates a scandal and that the responsibility for this scandal rests with the real. The in-itself is not diversity; it is not multiplicity; and in order for it to receive multiplicity as the characteristic of its being-in-the-midst-of-the-world, a being must arise which is simultaneously present to each in-itself isolated in its own identity. It is through human reality that multiplicity comes into the world; it is the quasi-multiplicity at the heart of being-for-itself which causes number to be revealed in the world.

But what is the meaning of these multiple dimensions or quasi-multiples of the For-itself? They are various relations to its being. When something simply is what it is, it has only one way of being its being. But the moment that something is no longer its being, then various ways of being it while not being it arise simultaneously. The For-itself—if we stick to the primary ekstases (those which both indicate the original meaning of the nihilation and represent the least nihilation)—can and must at the same time fulfill these three requirements: (1) to not-be what it is, (2) to be what it is not, (3) to be what it is not and to not-be what it is—within the unity of a perpetual referring. Here we are dealing with three ekstastic dimensions; the meaning of the ekstasis is distance from self. It is impossible to conceive of a consciousness which would not exist in these three dimensions. And if the cogito discovers one of them first, that does not mean that this dimension is first but only that it is most easily disclosed. But by itself alone it is *unselbständig* and it immediately allows the other dimensions to be seen. The For-itself is a being which must simultaneously exist in all its dimensions. Here distance, conceived as distance from the self, is nothing real, nothing which is in a general way as in-itself; it is simply the nothing, the nothingness which “is made-to-be” as separation. Each dimension is the For-itself’s way of projecting itself vainly toward the Self, of being what it is beyond a nothingness, a different way of being this fall of being, this frustration of being which the For-itself has to be. Let us consider these dimensions one by one.

In the first dimension the For-itself has to be its being, behind itself, as that which it is without being the foundation of it. Its being is there, opposite it, but a nothingness separates it from its being, the nothingness of facticity. The For-itself as the foundation of its nothingness—and as such necessary—is separated from its original contingency in that it can neither get rid of it nor merge with it. It is for itself but in the mode of the irreme-

diable and the gratuitous. Its being is for it, for it is not for this being, because such a reciprocity of reflection-reflecting would cause the original contingency of what is to disappear. Precisely because the For-itself apprehends itself in the form of being, it is at a distance—like a game of reflection-reflecting which slips into the in-itself and in which it is no longer the reflection which makes the reflecting exist nor the reflecting which makes the reflection exist. This being, because of the very fact that the For-itself has to be it, gives itself as something which is irretrievable precisely because the For-itself can not find it in the mode reflection-reflecting but only as it finds the connection between this being and itself. The For-itself does not find the being of this being but only the fact that this being can be given.

We are dealing here with an unconditional necessity: whatever the For-itself under consideration may be, it is in one certain sense; it is since it can be named, since certain characteristics may be affirmed or denied concerning it. But in so far as it is For-itself, it is never what it is. What it is is behind it as the perpetual surpassed. It is precisely this surpassed facticity which we call the Past. The Past then is a necessary structure of the For-itself; for the For-itself can exist only as a nihilating surpassing, and this surpassing implies something surpassed. Consequently it is impossible at any particular moment when we consider a For-itself, to apprehend it as not-yet-having a Past. We need not believe that the For-itself exists first and arises in the world in the absolute newness of a being without a past and that it then gradually constitutes a past for itself. But whatever may be the circumstances under which the For-itself arises in the world, it comes to the world in the ekstastic unity of a relation with its Past; there is no absolute beginning which without ever having a past would become past. Since the For-itself, qua For-itself, has to be its past, it comes into the world with a Past.

These few remarks may permit us to view in a somewhat different light the problem of birth. Actually it seems shocking that consciousness “appears” at a certain moment, that it comes “to inhabit” the embryo, in short that there is a moment when the living being in formation is without consciousness and a moment when a consciousness without a past is suddenly imprisoned in it. But the shock will cease if it appears that there can be no consciousness without a past. This does not mean, however, that every consciousness supposes a prior consciousness fixed in the In-itself. The relation of the present For-itself to the For-itself become In-itself hides from us the primitive relation of Pastness, which is a relation between the For-itself and the pure In-itself. In fact it is as the nihilation of the In-itself that the For-itself arises in the world, and it is by this absolute event that the Past as such is constituted as the original, nihilating relation between the For-itself and the In-itself. What originally constitutes the being of the For-itself is this relation to a being which is

not consciousness, which exists in the total night of identity, and which the For-itself is nevertheless obliged to be, outside and behind itself. The For-itself, which can in no case be reduced to this being represents an absolute newness in relation to it, but the For-itself feels a profound solidarity of being with it and indicates this by the word *before*. The In-itself is what the For-itself was *before*. In this sense we can easily conceive that our past appears to us bounded by a fine, smooth wire, which would become actual if consciousness could spring up in the world *before* having a past, but which, on the contrary, is lost in a progressive obscuration back to that darkness which is nevertheless still ourselves. We can conceive of the ontological meaning of this shocking solidarity with the foetus, a solidarity which we neither deny nor understand. For finally this foetus was me; it represents the factual limit for my memory but not the theoretical limit of my past.

There is a metaphysical problem concerning birth in that I can be anxious to know how *I* happen to have been born from *that particular* embryo; and this problem is perhaps insoluble. But it is not an ontological problem; we do not have to ask why there can be a birth of consciousness, for consciousness can appear to itself only as a nihilation of in-itself —i.e., as *being already born*. Birth as an ekstastic relation of being to the In-self which it is not and as the a priori constitution of pastness is a law of being for the For-itself. To be For-itself is to be born. But one should not next raise metaphysical questions concerning the In-itself from which the For-itself was born, questions such as: "How was there an In-itself before the birth of the For-itself? How was the For-itself born from *this* In-itself rather than from another?" *Etc.* All these questions fail to take into account the fact that it is through the For-itself that the Past in general can exist. If there is a *Before*, it is because the For-itself has arisen in the world, and it is from the standpoint of the For-itself that the past can be established. To the extent that the In-itself is made co-present with the For-itself, a *world* appears instead of isolated examples of In-itself. And in this world it is possible to effect a designation and to say *this* object, *that* object. In this sense, inasmuch as the For-itself in its coming into being causes a world of co-presences to exist, it causes also the appearance of its "before" as a co-present to the in-itselfs in a world or, if you prefer, in a state of the world which has passed.

Thus in a sense the For-itself appears as being born from the world, for the In-itself from which it is born is in the midst of the world, as a co-present past among co-present pasts; into the world and in terms of the world a For-itself arises which did not exist before and which has been born. But in another sense it is the For-itself which causes the existence of a *before* in general and the existence in this *before* of co-presents united in the unity of one past world and such that one can designate one or the other among them as *this* object. There is not first one universal time

where a For-itself suddenly appears not yet having a Past. Rather it is in terms of *birth* as the original and a *priori* law of being for the For-itself that there is revealed a world with a universal time in which we can designate a moment when the For-itself was not yet and a moment when it appeared, beings from which the For-itself was not born and a being from which it was born. Birth is the upsurge of the absolute relation of Pastness as the ekstastic being of the For-itself in the In-itself. Through birth a Past appears in the world. We shall return to this. Here it is sufficient to note that consciousness or for-itself is a being which rises to being beyond an unalterable which it is and that this unalterable, inasmuch as it is behind the For-itself in the midst of the world, is the Past.

The Past as the unalterable being which I have to be without any possibility of not being it does not enter into the unity "reflection-reflecting" of the *Erlebnis*; it is outside. Yet neither does it exist as that of which there is consciousness in the sense, for example, that the perceived chair is that of which there is perceptive consciousness. In the case of the perception of the chair, there is a thesis—that is, the apprehension and affirmation of the chair as the in-itself which consciousness is not. What consciousness has to be in the mode of being of the For-itself is not-being-the-chair. For its "not-being-the-chair" is, as we shall see, in the form of the consciousness (of) not-being (i.e., the appearance of not-being) for a witness who is there only to bear witness to this not-being. The negation then is explicit and constitutes the bond of being between the perceived object and the for-itself. The For-itself is nothing more than this translucent Nothing which is the negation of the thing perceived. But although the Past is outside, the connection here is not of the same type, for the For-itself gives itself as being the Past. Due to this fact there can not be a thesis of the Past, for one can posit only what one is not. Thus in the perception of the object the For-itself acknowledges itself to itself as not being the object, while in the unveiling of the Past, the For-itself acknowledges itself as being the Past and is separated from it only by its nature as For-itself, which can be nothing. Thus the Past is not made a *thesis*, and yet the Past is not immanent in the For-itself. It haunts the For-itself at the very moment that the For-itself acknowledges itself as not being this or that particular thing. The Past is not the object of the regard of the For-itself. This translucent regard is directed to itself beyond the thing, toward the future. The Past as a thing which one is without positing it, as that which haunts without being observed, is behind the For-itself, outside the thematic field which is before the For-itself as that which it illuminates. The Past is "posited opposite" the For-itself and assumed as that which the For-itself has to be without being able either to affirm or deny or thematize or absorb it.

To be sure, the Past can be the object of a thesis for me, and indeed it is often thematized. But then it is the object of an explicit investigation,

and in this case the For-itself affirms itself as *not being* this Past which it posits. The Past is no longer *behind*; it does not cease being past, but I myself cease to be the Past. In the primary mode I was my Past without knowing it (but by no means not without being conscious of it); in the secondary mode I know my past but I no longer was it. Someone may ask how I can be conscious of my Past if it is not in thethetic mode. Yet the Past is *there* constantly. It is the very meaning of the object which I look at and which I have already seen, of the familiar faces which surround me. It is the origin of this movement which presently follows and which I would not be able to call circular if I were not myself—in the Past—the witness of its beginning. It is the origin and springboard of all my actions; it is that constantly given density of the world which allows me to orient myself and to get my bearings. It is myself in so far as I aim at myself as a person (there is also a structure to-come of the Ego). In short, the Past is my contingent and gratuitous bond with the world and with myself inasmuch as I constantly live it as a total renunciation. The psychologists call it *empirical knowledge* (*savoir*). But in addition to the fact that by this term they “psychologize” it, they thus remove any method of accounting for it. For empirical knowledge is everywhere and conditions everything, even memory; in a word, intellectual memory presupposes knowledge. And what is their empirical knowledge—if we are to understand by it a present fact—if it is not an intellectual memory? This supple, insinuating, changing knowledge which makes the woof of all our thoughts and which is composed of a thousand empty indications, a thousand designations which point behind us, without image, without words, without thesis—this is my concrete Past inasmuch as I was it as the unalterable background-depth of all my thoughts and all my feelings.

In its second dimension of nihilation, the For-itself apprehends itself as a certain lack. It is this lack and it is also the *lacking*, for it has to be what it is. To drink or to be drinking means never to have finished drinking, to have still to be drinking beyond the drinking which I am. And when “I have finished drinking,” *I have drunk*: the ensemble slips into the past. While actually drinking, I am then this drinking which I have to be and which I am not; every designation of myself if it is to be heavy and full, if it is to have the density of the self-identical—every such designation escapes me into the past. If it reaches me in the Present, it is because it divides itself into the Not-yet; it is because it designates me as an unachieved totality which can not be achieved. This Not-yet is gnawed by the nihilating freedom of the For-itself. It is not only being-at-a-distance; it is the whittling down of being. Here the For-itself, which was in advance of itself in the first dimension of nihilation, is now behind itself. Before itself, behind itself: never itself. This is the very meaning of the two ekstases Past and Future, and this is why value in itself is by nature self-repose, non-temporality! The eternity which man is seeking is not the infinity of

duration, of that vain pursuit after the self for which I am myself responsible; man seeks a repose in self, the atemporality of the absolute coincidence with himself.

Finally, in the third dimension, the For-itself, dispersed in the perpetual game of reflected-reflecting,⁵ escapes itself in the unity of one and the the same flight. Here being is everywhere and nowhere: wherever one tries to seize it, it is there before one, it has escaped. It is this game of musical chairs at the heart of the For-itself which is Presence to being.⁶

As Present, Past, Future—all at the same time—the For-itself dispersing its being in three dimensions is temporal due to the very fact that it nihilates itself. No one of these dimensions has any ontological priority over the other; none of them can exist without the other two. Yet in spite of all this, it is best to put the accent on the present ekstasis and not on the future ekstasis as Heidegger does: for it is as a revelation to itself that the For-itself is its Past, as that which it has-to-be-for-itself in a nihilating surpassing; and it is as a revelation to itself that it is a lack and that it is haunted by its future—that is, by that which it is for itself down there at a distance. The Present is not ontologically “prior” to the Past and to the Future; it is conditioned by them as much as it conditions them, but it is the mould of indispensable non-being for the total synthetic form of Temporality.

Thus Temporality is not a universal time containing all beings and in particular human realities. Neither is it a law of development which is imposed on being from without. Nor is it being. But it is the intra-structure of the being which is its own nihilation—that is, the *mode of being* peculiar to being-for-itself. The For-itself is the being which has to be its being in the diasporatic form of Temporality.

B. THE DYNAMIC OF TEMPORALITY

THE fact that the upsurge of the For-itself is necessarily effected according to the three dimensions of Temporality teaches us nothing concerning the problem of duration, which falls under the heading of the dynamic of time. At first approach the problem appears twofold. Why does the For-itself undergo that modification of its being which makes it become Past? And why does a new For-itself arise *ex nihilo* to become the Present of this Past?

This problem has for a long time been disguised by a conception of the human being as an in-itself. It is the sinew of Kant's refutation of Berkeley's idealism and a favorite argument of Leibniz that change by itself

⁵ Possibly an error for the “reflection-reflecting,” which Sartre has used elsewhere. Tr.

⁶ I find it impossible to transfer the exact meaning from French to English. *Chassé-croisé*, literally a dancing expression, is equivalent to “set to partners.” From it derives the meaning of a futile rearrangement of personnel.

implies permanence. Consequently if we suppose a certain non-temporal permanence which remains across time, temporality is reduced to being no more than the measure and order of change. Without change there is no temporality since time could not get any hold on the permanent and the identical. Moreover if as with Leibniz change itself is given as the logical explanation of a relation of conclusions to premises—that is, as the development of the attributes of a permanent subject—then there is no longer any real temporality.

But this conception is based on several errors. First of all, the subsistence of a permanent element *apart from* something which changes can not allow change to be constituted as such except in the eyes of a witness who would be himself united with that which changes and with that which remains. In a word the unity of change and the permanent is necessary for the constitution of change as such. But this same term unity, which Leibniz and Kant have misused, does not signify very much here. What is meant by this unity of disparate elements? Is it only a purely external attachment? Then it has no meaning. It must be a unity of being. But such a unity of being amounts to requiring that the permanent be that which changes; and hence the unity is at the start ekstastic and refers to the For-itself inasmuch as the For-itself is essentially ekstastic being; in addition the unity prevents permanence and change from existing each as in-itself. What is not said is that permanence and change are taken here as phenomena and have only a relative being; the In-itself is not opposed to phenomena as the noumenon is. A phenomenon is in-itself, according to the very terms of our definition, when it is what it is, even if it is in relation with a subject or another phenomenon. Moreover the appearance of relation as determining the phenomena in connection with each other supposes antecedently the upsurge of an ekstastic being which can be what it is not in order to establish the “elsewhere” and relation in general.

Moreover resorting to permanence in order to furnish the foundation for change is completely useless. What Kant and Leibniz want to show is that an absolute change is no longer strictly speaking change since it is no longer based on *anything* which changes—or in relation to which there is change. But in fact if what changes is its former state in the past mode, this is sufficient to make permanence superfluous. In this case change can be absolute; we can be dealing with a metamorphosis which touches all of being; it will be constituted as change in relation to a prior state just as it will be in the Past in the mode of was. Since this link with the past replaces the pseudo-necessity of permanence, the problem of duration can and ought to be posited in relation to absolute changes. Moreover there is no other kind even “in the world.” Up to a certain threshold changes are non-existent; past this threshold, they extend to the total form—as the experiments of the Gestalt school have shown

In addition when we are dealing with human reality, what is necessary

is pure and absolute change, which can very well be in addition a change with *nothing* which changes and which is actual duration. Even if we admitted, for example, that the simple consciousness of a For-itself was the absolutely empty presence of this For-itself to a permanent In-itself, still the very existence of the consciousness would imply temporality since it would have to be without change what it is in the form of "having been it." There would be then not eternity but the constant necessity for the present For-itself to become the Past of a new Present and that by virtue of the very being of consciousness. And if someone should tell us that this perpetual recovery of the Present in the Past by a new Present implies an inner change in the For-itself, we should reply that then it is the temporality of the For-itself which is the foundation of the change and not the change which furnishes the foundation for temporality. Nothing can hide the following problems which at first seem insoluble: Why does the Present become the Past? What is this new Present which then springs forth? Where does it come from, and why does it arise? We must note that as is shown by our hypothesis of an "empty" consciousness, the question here is not the necessity for a permanence to cascade from instant to instant while remaining materially a permanence. The real question is the necessity for being, whatever it may be, to metamorphose itself completely at once—form and content, to sink into the past and to thrust itself forward at the same time *ex nihilo* toward the future.

But are these really two problems? Let us look more closely. The Present could not pass except by becoming the *before* of a For-itself which constitutes itself as the *after* of that Present. There is then only one phenomenon: the upsurge of a new Present which is making-past the Present which it was, and the Making-Past of a Present involving the appearance of a For-itself for which this Present is going to become Past. The phenomenon of temporal becoming is a global modification since a Past which would be the Past of nothing would no longer be a Past and since a Present must be necessarily the Present of this Past. This metamorphosis, moreover, affects not only the pure Present; the former Past and Future are equally affected. The Past of the Present which has undergone the modification of Pastness, becomes the Past of a Past—or a Pluperfect. So far as the Pluperfect is concerned, the heterogeneity of the Present and the Past is now suddenly suppressed since what made the Present distinct as such from the Past has now become Past. In the course of the metamorphosis the Present remains the Present of this Past, but it becomes the past Present of this Past. That means first that this present is homogeneous with the series of the Past which extends from it all the way back to its birth, second that this present is no longer its Past in the form of having to be it but in the mode of having had to be it. The connection between Past and Pluperfect is a connection which is

in the mode of the In-itself, and it appears on the foundation of the present For-itself. It is this which holds the series of the Past and pluperfects welded into a single block.

The Future, on the other hand, although equally affected by the metamorphosis, does not cease to be future—that is, to remain outside the For-itself, in advance, beyond being—but it becomes the future of a past or a former future. It can enter into two kinds of relations with the new Present according to whether we are dealing with the immediate Future or the far Future. In the first case the Present is given as being this Future in relation to the Past: “What I was waiting for—here it is.” It is the Present of its Past in the mode of the former Future of this Past. But at the same time that it is For-itself as the Future of this Past, it realizes itself as For-itself, therefore as not being what the Future promised to be. There is a split: the Present becomes the Former Future of the Past while denying that it is *this* Future. And the original Future is not realized; it is no longer future in relation to the Present, but it does not cease to be future in relation to the Past. It becomes the unrealizable co-present of the Present and preserves a total ideality. “Is this what I was waiting for?” It remains a future ideally co-present with the Present, as the unrealized Future of the Past of this Present.

When the Future is far removed, it remains future in relation to the new Present; but if the Present does not constitute itself as the lack of *this* Future, then this Future loses its character as possibility. In this case the former Future becomes an indifferent possible in relation to the new Present and not *its* Possible. In this sense it no longer possibilizes itself but *qua* possible it receives being-in-itself. It becomes a given Possible; that is, a Possible which is in-itself for a For-itself become In-itself. Yesterday it was possible—as my Possible—that I should leave next Monday for the country. Today this Possible is no longer my Possible; it remains the thematized object of my contemplation and has become the always future Possible *which I have been*. But its only bond with my Present is that I have to be in the mode of “was” this Present become Past for which this possible has not ceased being a possible—beyond my Present. But Future and past Present are solidified in the In-itself on the foundation of my Present. Thus the Future in the course of the temporal process, passes to the in-itself without ever losing its character as Future. In so far as it is not achieved by the Present, it becomes simply a given Future. When it is achieved, it is affected with the quality of *ideality*; but this ideality is ideality *in-itself*, for it presents itself as a *given* lack of a given past and not as the lacking which a present For-itself has to be in the mode of *not being*. When the Future is surpassed, it remains forever on the margin of the series of Pasts as a former Future—a former Future of a particular Past become Pluperfect, an ideal given Future as co-present to a Present become Past.

We have yet to examine the metamorphosis of the present For-itself into the Past with the accompanying upsurge of a new Present. It would be an error to believe that the former Present is abolished and that there arises a Present in-itself which retains an *image* of the vanished Present. In one sense it would almost be correct to reverse our terms in order to find the truth, for the making-past of the ex-present is a passage to the in-itself while the appearance of a new present is the nihilation of that in-itself. The Present is not a new In-itself; it is what it is not, that which is beyond being; it is that of which we can say "it is" only in the Past. The Past is not abolished; it is that which has become what it was; it is the Being of the Present. Finally, as we have sufficiently demonstrated, the relation of the Present to the Past is a relation of being, not of representation.

Consequently the first characteristic which strikes us is the reapprehension of the For-itself by Being, as if the For-itself no longer had the strength to sustain its own nothingness. That deep fissure which the For-itself has to be is filled up; the Nothingness which must "be made-to-be" ceases to be, is expelled with the result that Being-For-itself, made past, becomes a *quality* of the In-itself. If I have experienced a particular sadness in the past, it exists no longer in so far as I have made myself experience it. This sadness no longer has the exact measure of being which can be enjoyed by an appearance which makes itself its own witness. It is because it *has been*; being comes to it, so to speak, as an external necessity. The Past is a fatality in reverse. The For-itself can make itself what it wishes, but it can not escape from the necessity of being irremediably—for a new For-itself—what it has wished to be. Hence the Past is a For-itself which has ceased to be a transcending presence to the In-itself. Now become an in-itself, it has fallen *into the midst of the world*. What I have to be I am as a presence to the world which I am not but which I was; I was it in the midst of the world, just as things are, by virtue of existing within-the-world. Nevertheless this world in which the For-itself has to be what it was can not be the same as that to which it is actually present. Thus is constituted the Past of the For-itself as the past presence to a past state of the world. Even if the world has undergone no variation while the For-itself "passed" from the Present to the Past, it is at least apprehended as having undergone the same formal change which we described earlier as taking place at the heart of being-for-itself. This is a change which is only a reflection of the true internal change of consciousness. In other words, the For-itself falling into the Past as an ex-presence-to-being becomes in-itself, becomes a being "in-the-midst-of-the-world," and the world is retained in the past dimension as that in the midst of which the past For-itself is in itself. Like the Siren whose human body is completed in the tail of a fish, the extra-mundane For-itself is com-

pleted behind itself as a *thing in the world*. I am angry, melancholy, I have an Oedipus Complex or an inferiority complex for always, but in the past in the form of the "was" in the midst of the world—just as I am a civil servant or a man with one arm or a proletarian. In the past the world surrounds me, and I lose myself in the universal determinism; but I radically transcend my past toward the future to the same extent that I "was it."

A For-itself which has squeezed out all its nothingness and been reapprehended by the In-itself, a For-itself dissolving into the world—such is the Past which I have to be, such is the avatar of the For-itself. But this avatar is produced in unity with the appearance of a For-itself which nihilates itself as Presence to the world and which has to be the Past which it transcends. What is the meaning of this upsurge? We must guard against seeing here the appearance of a new being. Everything happens as if the Present were a perpetual hole in being—immediately filled up and perpetually reborn—as if the Present were a perpetual flight away from the snare of the "in-itself" which threatens it until that final victory of the in-itself which will drag it into a past which is no longer the past of any For-itself. It is death which is this victory, for death is the final arrest of Temporality by the making-past of the whole system, or, if you prefer, by the recapture of human Totality by the In-self.

How can we explain this dynamic character of temporality? If it is not—as we hope we have demonstrated—a contingent quality which is added to the being of the for-itself, we must be able to show that its dynamic is an essential structure of the For-itself conceived as the being which has to be its own nothingness. We find ourselves once more it seems, at our point of departure.

But the truth is that there is no problem. If we believe that we have met one, this is because in spite of our efforts to think of the for-itself as really for-itself, we have not been able to prevent ourselves from fixing it in the in-itself. If we start from the in-itself, the appearance of change can indeed constitute a problem: if the in-itself is what it is, how can it no longer be so. But if, on the contrary, we proceed from an adequate comprehension of the for-itself, it is no longer change which needs explaining but rather permanence—if permanence can exist. In fact if we consider our description of the order of time apart from everything which could come from the course of time, it is clear that a temporality reduced to its order would immediately become temporality *in-itself*. The ekstastic character of temporal being would not change anything here since this character is found in the past, not as constitutive of the for-itself but as a quality supported by the in-itself. If we imagine a Future such that it is purely and simply the Future of a for-itself, which is the for-itself of a certain past, and if we consider that change is a new

problem in relation to the description of temporality as such, then we confer on the Future, conceived as *this* Future, an instantaneous immobility; we make of the for-itself a fixed quality which can be designated; and finally the ensemble becomes a *made* totality, the future and the past restrict the for-itself and constitute given limits for it. The ensemble as temporarily which is, is petrified around a solid nucleus, which is the present instant of the for-itself, and the problem is then indeed to explain how from this instant can arise another instant with its own cortege of past and future. We have escaped instantaneity in the sense that the instant would be the only in-itself reality limited by a nothingness of the future and a nothingness of the past, but we have fallen back into it by implicitly admitting a succession of temporal totalities of which each one would be centered around an instant. In a word, we have endowed the instant with ekstatic dimensions, but we have not thereby suppressed it, which means that we cause temporal totality to be supported by the non-temporal. Time, if it is, becomes again merely a dream.

But change belongs naturally to the for-itself inasmuch as *this* for-itself is spontaneity. A spontaneity of which we can say: it is. Or simply: *This* spontaneity should be allowed to define itself; this means both that it is the foundation not only of its nothingness of being but also of its being and that simultaneously being recaptures it to fix it in the given. A spontaneity which posits itself qua spontaneity is obliged by the same stroke to refuse what it posits; otherwise its being would become an acquisition and it would be perpetuated in being as the result of being acquired. Yet this refusal itself is an acquisition which it must refuse lest it be ensnared in an inert prolongation of its existence. Someone may say that these ideas of prolongation and of acquisition already suppose temporality, and that is true. But this is because spontaneity itself constitutes the acquisition by the refusal and the refusal by the acquisition, for spontaneity can not be without temporalizing itself. Its peculiar nature is not to profit from the acquisition which it constitutes by realizing itself as spontaneity. It is impossible otherwise to conceive of spontaneity without contracting it within an instant and thereby fixing it in in-itself; that is, without supposing a transcendent time. It would be in vain to object that we cannot think of anything except in temporal form and that our account begs the question since we temporalize being in order to make time spring from it a little afterwards. It would be useless to remind us of the passages in the *Critique* where Kant shows that a non-temporal spontaneity is inconceivable but not contradictory. It seems to us, on the contrary, that a spontaneity which would not escape from itself and which would not escape from that very escape, of which we could say, "It is this," and which would allow itself to be inclosed in an unchangeable denomination—it seems that such a spontaneity would be precisely a contradiction

and that it would ultimately be the equivalent of a particular affirmative essence, the eternal subject which is never a predicate. Moreover it is precisely its character as spontaneity which constitutes the very irreversibility of its evasions since from the moment of its appearance it is in order to refuse itself and since the order "positing-refusing" can not be reversed. The very positing is achieved in a refusing without ever attaining to an affirmative plenitude; otherwise it would be exhausted in an instantaneous in-itself, and it is only because it is refused that it passes to being in the totality of its accomplishment. The unitary series of "acquisitions-refused" has in addition an ontological priority over change, for change is simply the relation of the material contents of the series. But we have shown that the very irreversibility of temporalization⁷ is necessary to the completely empty and a priori form of a spontaneity.

I have presented this thesis by using the concept of spontaneity which seemed to me more familiar to my readers. But we can now take up these ideas again in the perspective of the for-itself and with our own terminology. A for-itself which did not endure would remain of course a negation of the transcendent in-itself and a nihilation of its own being in the form of the "reflection-reflecting." But this nihilation would become a given; that is, it would acquire the contingency of the in-itself, and the For-itself would cease to be the foundation of its own nothingness; it would no longer be as having to be, but in the nihilating unity of the dyad reflection-reflecting, it would be. The flight of the for-itself is the refusal of contingency by the very act which constitutes the for-itself as being the foundation of its nothingness. But this flight establishes in contingency exactly what is fled: the for-itself which has been fled is left at its place. It can not be annihilated since I am it, but neither can it any longer be as the foundation of its own nothingness since it can be this only in flight. It is accomplished. What applies to the for-itself as presence to — is also naturally appropriate as well to the totality of temporalization. This totality never is achieved; it is a totality which is refused and which flees from itself. It is the wrenching away from self within the unity of a single upsurge, an inapprehensible totality which at the moment when it gives itself is already beyond this gift of self.

Thus the time of consciousness is human reality which temporalizes itself as the totality which is to itself its own incompleteness; it is nothingness slipping into a totality as a detotalizing ferment. This totality which runs after itself and refuses itself at the same time, which can find in itself no limit to its surpassing because it is its own surpassing and because it surpasses itself toward itself, can under no circumstance exist within the limits of an instant. There is never an instant at which we can assert that the for-itself is, precisely because the for-itself never is. Temporality, on the contrary, temporalizes itself entirely as the refusal of the instant.

⁷ Correction for temporalization, an obvious misprint. Tr.

III. ORIGINAL TEMPORALITY AND PSYCHIC TEMPORALITY: REFLECTION

THE for-itself endures in the form of a non-thetic consciousness (of) enduring. But I can "feel the time which flows" and apprehend myself as a unity of succession. In this case I am conscious of enduring. This consciousness is thetic and strongly resembles a knowledge just as duration which is temporalized under my regard is roughly like an object of knowledge. What relation can exist between original temporality and this psychic temporality which I encounter as soon as I apprehend myself "in process of enduring"? This problem brings us immediately to another problem, for the consciousness of duration is a consciousness of a consciousness which endures; consequently to posit the question of the nature and laws of this thetic consciousness of duration amounts to positing that of the nature and the laws of reflection. In fact temporality in the form of psychic duration belongs to reflection, and all the processes of psychic duration belong to the consciousness reflected-on.

Before asking how a psychic duration can be constituted as the immanent object of reflection, we must try to answer this preliminary question: how is reflection possible for a being which can be only in the past? Reflection is given by Descartes and by Husserl as a type of privileged intuition because it apprehends consciousness in an act of present and instantaneous immanence. Will it keep its certitude if the being which it has to know is past in relation to it? And since all our ontology has its foundation in a reflective experience, does it not risk losing all its laws? Yet is it actually the past being which should make the object of reflective consciousness? If the process of reflection itself is a for-itself, ought it to be limited to an existence and certitude which are instantaneous? We can decide these questions only if we return to the reflective phenomenon and determine its structure.

Reflection is the for-itself conscious of itself. As the for-itself is already a non-thetic self-consciousness, we are accustomed to represent reflection as a new consciousness, abruptly appearing, directed on the consciousness reflected-on, and living in symbiosis with it. One recalls here the old *idea ideae* of Spinoza.

But aside from the fact that it is difficult to explain the upsurge *ex nihilo* of the reflective consciousness, it is completely impossible in this way to account for its absolute unity with the consciousness reflected-on, a unity which alone renders conceivable the laws and the certainty of the reflective intuition. We cannot here indeed say that the *esse* of that which is reflected-on is a *percipi* since its being is such that it does not need to be perceived in order to exist. And its primary relation with reflection can not be the unitary relation of a representation to a thinking subject. If the known existent is to have the same rank of being as the knowing existent,

then, in short, it is in the perspective of naive realism that we must describe the relation of these two existents. But in this case we are going to encounter the major difficulty of realism: how can two completely isolated independents, provided with that sufficiency of being which the Germans call *Selbständigkeit*, enter into relation with each other, and in particular how can they enter into that type of internal relation which we call knowledge? If first we conceive of reflection as an autonomous consciousness, we shall never be able to reunite it later with the consciousness reflected-on. They will always be two, and if—to suppose the impossible—the reflective consciousness could be consciousness of the consciousness reflected-on, there could be only an external connection between the two consciousness; at most we could imagine that reflection isolated in itself possesses an image of the consciousness reflected-on, and we would then fall back into idealism. Reflective knowledge, and in particular the *cogito* would lose their certainty and would obtain in exchange only a certain probability, scarcely definable. It is agreed then that reflection must be united to that which is reflected-on by a bond of being, that the reflective consciousness must be the consciousness reflected-on.

But on the other hand, there can be no question here of a total identification of the reflective with that reflected-on, for this would suddenly suppress the phenomenon of reflection by allowing only the phantom dyad “the-reflection-reflecting”⁸ to subsist. Here once again we meet that type of being which defines the for-itself: reflection—if it is to be apodictic evidence—demands that the reflective be that which is reflected-on. But to the extent that reflection is knowledge, the reflected-on must necessarily be the object for the reflective; and this implies a separation of being. Thus it is necessary that the reflective simultaneously be and not be the reflected-on. We have already discovered this ontological structure at the heart of the for-itself. But then it did not have at all the same meaning. In fact it supposed in the two terms “reflected and reflecting” a radical *Unselbständigkeit* on the part of the suggested duality; that is, such an inability on the part of the terms to be posited separately that the duality remained perpetually evanescent and each term, while positing

⁸ The translator encounters a difficulty here owing to the fact that the English word “reflection” has two different meanings which are perfectly distinct in French. In discussing the dyad “reflection-reflecting,” Sartre uses *reflet-reflétant*. Here “reflection” means that which is reflected—like an image—and easily suggests to Sartre the idea of a game with mirrors. In the present section, however, the subject of discussion is *reflexion*, which mean the process of mental reflection in general and in particular introspection. As a feeble attempt to prevent confusion, I am in this section using the article with *reflet*, the “reflection” in the dyad, and in some cases I am giving the French as well.

A similar but less insoluble difficulty occurs with words deriving from *refléchir* (to reflect in the sense of *reflexion*) and *refléter* (to reflect an image). To distinguish these I am using the English expression “reflect-on” where mental action is involved. “Reflective” also indicates the mental process of reflection. Tr.

itself for the other, became the other. But in the case of reflection, the case is slightly different since "the reflection-reflecting," which is reflected-on exists for a "reflection-reflecting" which is reflective. In other words, the reflected-on is an appearance for the reflective without thereby ceasing to be witness (of) itself, and the reflective is witness of the reflected-on without thereby ceasing to be an appearance to itself. It is even in so far as it is reflected in itself (*se reflète en soi*) that the reflected-on is an appearance for the reflective, and the reflective can be witness only in so far as it is consciousness (of) being so; that is, to the exact extent that this witness, which it is, is a reflection (*reflet*) for a reflecting which it is also. Reflected-on and reflective therefore each tend to the *Selbständigkeit*, and the nothing which separates them divides them more profoundly than the nothingness of the for-itself separates the reflection (*reflet*) from the reflecting.

Yet we must note two things: (1) Reflection (reflexion) as witness can have its being as witness only in and through the appearance; that is, it is profoundly affected in its being by its reflectivity and consequently can never achieve the *Selbständigkeit* at which it aims, since it derives its being from its function and its function from the for-itself reflected-on. (2) The reflected-on is profoundly altered by reflection (reflexion) in this sense that it is self-consciousness as the consciousness reflected-on of this or that transcendent phenomenon. The reflected-on knows itself observed. It may best be compared—to use a concrete example—to a man who is writing, bent over a table, and who while writing knows that he is observed by somebody who stands behind him. The reflected-on has then, in a way, already a consciousness (of) itself as having an outside or rather the suggestion of an outside; that is, it makes himself an object for —, so that its meaning as reflected-on is inseparable from the reflective and exists over there at a distance from itself in the consciousness which reflects on it. In this sense the reflected-on does not possess *Selbständigkeit* any more than the reflective itself.

Husserl tells us that the reflected-on "gives itself as having been there before reflection." But we must not be deceived here; the *Selbständigkeit* of the not-reflected-on qua not-reflected-on in relation to all possible reflection does not pass into the phenomenon of reflection, for the phenomenon loses its character as not reflected-on. For a consciousness, to become reflected-on means to undergo a profound modification of its being and precisely to lose the *Selbständigkeit* which it possessed as the quasi-totality "the reflected-reflecting." Finally, to the extent that a nothingness separates the reflected-on from the reflective, this nothingness, which cannot derive its being from itself, must "be made-to-be." Let us understand by this that only a unitary structure of being can be its own nothingness in the form of *having to be it*. In fact neither the reflective nor the reflected-on can issue this separating nothingness. But

reflection is *one being*, just like the unreflective for-itself, not an addition of being; it is a *being which has to be its own nothingness*. It is not the appearance of a new consciousness directed on the for-itself but an intra-structural modification which the for-itself realizes in itself; in a word it is the for-itself which makes itself exist in the mode reflective-reflected-on, instead of being simply in the mode of the dyad reflection-reflecting; furthermore, this new mode of being allows the mode of the reflection-reflecting to subsist as a primary inner structure. The one who is reflecting on me is not some sort of non-temporal regard but myself, myself who am enduring engaged in the circuit of my selfness, in danger in the world, with my historicity. This historicity and this being-in-the-world and this circuit of selfness—these the for-itself which I am lives in the mode of the reflective dissociation (*dédoublement*).

As we have seen, the reflective is separated from the reflected-on by a nothingness. Thus the phenomenon of reflection is a nihilation of the for-itself, a nihilation which does not come to it from without but which it *has to be*. Where is the origin of this further nihilation? What can be its motivation?

In the upsurge of the for-itself as presence to being, there is an original dispersion: the for-itself is lost outside, next to the in-itself, and in the three temporal ekstases. It is outside of itself, and in its inmost heart this being-for-itself is ecstatic since it must look for its being elsewhere—in the reflecting (*réflétant*) if it makes itself a reflection (*reflet*), in the reflection if it posits itself as reflecting. The upsurge of the for-itself confirms the failure of the in-itself, which has not been able to be its own foundation. Reflection (*reflexion*) remains for the for-itself a permanent possibility, an attempt to recover being. By reflection the for-itself, which has lost itself outside itself, attempts to put itself inside its own being. Reflection is a second effort by the for-itself to found itself; that is, *to be for itself what it is*. Indeed if the quasi-dyad the reflection-reflecting were gathered up into a totality for a witness which-would be itself, it would be in its own eyes what it is. The goal in short is to overtake that being which flees itself while being what it is in the mode of not-being and which flows on while being its own flow, which escapes between its own fingers; the goal is to make of it a given, a given which finally is what it is; the problem is to gather together in the unity of one regard this unachieved totality which is unachieved only because it is to itself its own non-achievement, to escape from the sphere of the perpetual reference which has to be a reference to itself, and—precisely because it has escaped from the chains of this reference—to *make it be* as a seen reference—that is, as a reference which is what it is.

But at the same time it is necessary that this being which recovers itself and establishes itself as a given—that is, which confers on itself the contingency of being in order to preserve it while founding it—this must

itself be that which it recovers and finds, that which it preserves from the ekstatic scattering. The motivation of reflection (reflexion) consists in a double attempt, simultaneously an objectivation and an interiorization. To be to itself as an object-in-itself in the absolute unity of interiorization—that is what the being-of-reflection has to be.

This effort to be to itself its own foundation, to recover and to dominate within itself its own flight, finally to be that flight instead of temporalizing it as the flight which is fled—this effort inevitably results in failure; and it is precisely this failure which is reflection. In fact it is itself the being which has to recover the being which is lost, and it must be this recovery in the mode of being which is its own; that is, in the mode of the for-itself, therefore of flight. It is qua *for-itself* that the for-itself will try to be what it is or, if you prefer, it will be *for itself* what it is-for-itself. Thus reflection or the attempt to recover the for-itself by a turning back on itself results in the appearance of the for-itself for the for-itself. The being which wants to find a foundation in being is itself the foundation only of its own nothingness. The ensemble consequently remains a nihilated in-itself. At the same time the turning back of being on itself can only cause the appearance of a distance between what turns back and that on which it turns. This turning back upon the self is a wrenching away from self in order to return to it. It is this turning back which effects the appearance of reflective nothingness. For the necessary structure of the for-itself requires that its being can be recovered only by a being which itself exists in the form of for-itself.⁹ Thus the being which effects the recovery must be constituted in the mode of the for-itself, and the being which is to be recovered must exist as for-itself. And these two beings must be *the same being*. But exactly in so far as this being recovers *itself*, it causes an absolute distance to exist between itself and itself—in the unity of being. This phenomenon of reflection is a permanent possibility of the for-itself because reflective scissiparity exists potentially in the for-itself which is reflected-on; it suffices in fact that the reflecting for-itself (refléctant) posit itself for it as a witness of the reflection (reflet) and that the for-itself (the reflection) posit itself *for it* as a reflection of this reflecting. Thus reflection (reflexion) as the effort of a for-itself to recover a for-itself which it is in the mode of non-being is a stage of nihilation intermediate between the pure and simple existence of the for-itself and existence *for-others*; it is an act on the part of a for-itself to recover a for-itself which it is not in the mode of non-being.¹⁰

⁹ The French says “without the form of,” which makes no sense and must surely be a misprint. Tr.

¹⁰ We find here again that “division of the equal to itself” which Hegel makes the peculiar trait of consciousness. But this division instead of leading to a higher integration, as in the *Phenomenology of Mind* only makes deeper and more irremediable the nothingness which separates consciousness from itself. Consciousness is Hegelian, but it is Hegel’s greatest illusion.

Can reflection thus described be limited in its laws and its scope by the fact that the for-itself temporalizes itself? We think not.

We must distinguish two kinds of reflection if we wish to grasp the reflective phenomenon in its relations with temporality: reflection can be either pure or impure. Pure reflection, the simple presence of the reflective-for-itself to the for-itself reflected-on, is at once the original form of reflection and its ideal form; it is that on whose foundation impure reflection appears, it is that also which is never first given; and it is that which must be won by a sort of katharsis. Impure or accessory reflection, of which we will speak later, includes pure reflection but surpasses it and makes further claims.

What are the evident claims and rights of pure reflection? Evidently the reflective is the reflected-on. Outside of that we should have no means of legitimizing reflection. But the reflective is the reflected-on in complete immanence although in the form of "not-being-in-itself." It is this which well demonstrates the fact that the reflected-on is not wholly an object but a quasi-object for reflection. Actually the consciousness reflected-on is not presented yet as something outside reflection—that is, as a being on which one can "take a point of view," in relation to which one can realize a withdrawal, increase or diminish the distance which separates one from it. In order for the consciousness reflected-on to be "viewed from without" and in order for reflection to be able to orient itself in relation to it, it would be necessary that the reflective should not be the reflected-on in the mode of not being what it is not: this scissiparity will be realized only in existence for-others.

Reflection is a knowledge; of that there is no doubt. It is provided with a positional character; it affirms the consciousness reflected-on. But every affirmation, as we shall soon see, is conditioned by a negation: to affirm *this* object is simultaneously to deny that I am *this* object. To know is to make oneself other. Now the reflective can not make itself wholly other than the reflected-on since it is *in-order-to-be* the reflected-on. Its affirmation is stopped halfway because its negation is not entirely realized. It does not then detach itself completely from the reflected-on, and it can not grasp the reflected-on "from a point of view." Its knowledge is a totality; it is a lightning intuition without relief, without point of departure, and without point of arrival. Everything is given at once in a sort of absolute proximity. What we ordinarily call knowing supposes reliefs, levels, an order, a hierarchy. Even mathematical essences are revealed to us with an orientation in relation to other truths, to certain consequences; they are never disclosed with all their characteristics at once. But the reflection which delivers the reflected-on to us, not as a given but as the being which we have to be, in indistinction without a point of view, is a knowledge overflowing itself and without explanation. At the same time it is never surprised by itself; it does not teach us anything but only posits.

In the knowledge of a transcendent object indeed there is a revelation of the object, and the object revealed can deceive or surprise us. But in the reflective revelation there is a positing of a being whose being was already a revelation. Reflection is limited to making this revelation exist for itself; the revealed being is not revealed as a given but with the character of the "already revealed." Reflection is a recognition rather than knowledge. It implies as the original motivation of the recovery a pre-reflective comprehension of what it wishes to recover.

But if the reflective is the reflected-on, if this unity of being founds and limits the laws of reflection, it should be added that the reflected-on, itself, is its past and its future. There is then no doubt that although the totality of the reflected-on, which the reflective is in the mode of non-being, perpetually overflows the reflective, still the reflective extends its apodictic laws to that very totality which it is. Thus the reflective achievement of Descartes, the *cogito*, must not be limited to the infinitesimal instant. Moreover this conclusion could be drawn from the fact that *thought* is an act which engages the past and shapes its outline by the future. I doubt therefore that *I am*, said Descartes. But what would remain of methodical doubt if it could be limited to the instant? A suspension of judgment, perhaps. But a suspension of judgment is not a doubt; it is only a necessary structure of doubt. In order for doubt to exist, it is necessary that this suspension be motivated by an insufficiency of reasons for affirming or for denying—which refers to the past—and that it be maintained deliberately until the intervention of new elements—which is already a project of the future. Doubt appears on the foundation of a pre-ontological comprehension of *knowing* and of requirements concerning truth. This comprehension and these requirements, which give all its meaning to doubt, engage the totality of human reality and its being in the world; they suppose the existence of an object of knowledge and of doubt—that is, of a transcendent permanence in universal time. It is then a related conduct which doubts the object, a conduct which represents one of the modes of the being-in-the-world of human reality. To discover oneself doubting is already to be ahead of oneself in the future, which conceals the end, the cessation, and the meaning of this doubt, and to be behind oneself in the past, which conceals the constituent motivations of the doubt and its stages of development, and to be outside of oneself in the world as presence to the object which one doubts.

These same observations would apply to any reflective statement: *I read, I dream, I perceive, I act*. Either they should lead us to refuse to grant apodictic evidence to reflection, and then the original knowledge which *I* have of myself would melt into mere probability and my very existence is only a probability (for my being-in-the-instant is not a being)—or else we must extend the laws of reflection to human totality—i.e., to the past, to the future, to presence, to the object. But if we have observed accu-

rately, reflection is the for-itself which seeks to recover itself as a totality in perpetual incompleteness. It is the affirmation of the revelation of the being which is to itself its own revelation. As the for-itself temporalizes itself, there are these results: (1) Reflection, as the mode of being of the for-itself, must be as temporalization, and it is itself its past and its future. (2) By nature reflection extends its laws and its certitude to the possibilities which *I am* and to the past which *I was*. The reflective is not the apprehension of an instantaneous reflected-on, but neither is it itself instantaneity. This does not mean that the reflective knows *with its future* the future of the reflected-on and *with its past* the past of the consciousness to be known. On the contrary it is by means of the future and the past that the reflective and the reflected-on are distinguished within the unity of their being. The future of the reflective in fact, is the ensemble of its own possibilities which the reflective has to be *qua* reflective. As such it could not include a consciousness of the future reflected-on. The same remarks would be valid for the reflective past although this is founded ultimately in the past of the original for-itself. But if reflection derives its meaning from its future and its past, it is already as a fleeing presence to a flight, ekstastically the whole length of this flight. In other words the for-itself, which makes itself exist in the mode of the reflective dissociation, as for-itself derives its meaning from its possibilities and from its future. In this sense reflection is a diasporatic phenomenon; but as a presence to itself, the for-itself is a presence present to all its ekstastic dimensions.

It remains to explain, someone may say, how this reflection, which you are claiming to be apodictic, can make so many errors with respect to just that past which you give it the capacity to know. I reply that it is free from any error to the exact extent that it apprehends the past as that which haunts the present in non-thematic form. When I say, "I read, I doubt, I hope, etc." as we have shown, I reach beyond my present toward the past. Now I cannot in any of these cases be mistaken. The apodictic nature of reflection allows no doubt in so far as it apprehends the past exactly as it is for the consciousness reflected-on which has to be it. On the other hand, I can make many an error when recalling to myself in the reflective mode my past feelings or my past ideas; this is because I am on the plane of memory. At that moment I no longer *am* my past but I am thematizing it. We are then no longer dealing with the reflective act.

Thus reflection is consciousness of the three ekstastic dimensions. It is a non-thetic consciousness (of) flow and a thetic consciousness of duration. For reflection the past and the present of the reflected-on are set in existence as *quasi-outside* in this sense: that they are not only held in the unity of a for-itself which exhausts their being in having to be it but also for a for-itself which is separated from them by a nothingness; they are for a for-itself which, while existing with them in the unity of a

being, does not have to be their being. Through reflection also the flow reaches toward *being* as an "outside" outlined in immanence. But pure reflection still discovers temporality only in its own original non-substantiality, in its refusal to be in-itself. It discovers possibles *qua* possibles, lightened by the freedom of the for-itself. It reveals the present as transcendent; and if the past appears to it as in-itself, still the past is on the foundation of presence. Finally reflection discovers the for-itself in its detotalized totality as the incomparable individuality which reflection *itself* is in the mode of having to be it. It discovers the for-itself as the "reflected-on, *par excellence*," the being which is always only as itself and which is always this "self" at a distance from itself, in the future, in the past, in the world. Reflection therefore apprehends temporality and reveals it as the unique and incomparable mode of being of a selfness—that is, as historicity.

But the psychological duration which we know and which we daily make use of as successions of organized temporal forms is the opposite of historicity. It is in fact the concrete fabric of the psychic unities of the flow. This joy, for example, is an organized form which appears after a sadness, and before that there was that humiliation which I experienced yesterday. Relations of before and after are commonly established between these unities of flow, qualities, states, acts; and these are the unities which can be used for dating. Thus the reflective consciousness of man-in-the-world in his daily existence is found in the face of psychic objects which are what they are, which appear in the continuous woof of our temporality like the designs and motifs on a tapestry, and which succeed each other in the manner of things in the world in universal time; that is, by replacing each other without entering into any relation other than the purely external relations of succession.

We speak of a joy which I *have* or which I *had*; we say that it is my joy as if I were its support and as if it were detached from me as the finite modes of Spinoza are detached from the ground of the attribute. We even say that I *experience* this joy as if it came to imprint itself like a seal on the texture of my temporalization; or better yet, as if the presence in me of these feelings, of these ideas, of these states were a sort of visitation. We can not call it an illusion—this psychic duration constituted by the concrete flow of autonomous organizations; that is, in short, by the succession of psychic facts, of facts of consciousness. Indeed it is their reality which is the object of psychology. Practically it is on the level of psychic fact that concrete relations between men are established—claims, jealousies, grudges, suggestions, struggles, ruses, etc. Yet it is not conceivable that the unreflective for-itself, which historicizes itself¹¹ in its upsurge, should be *itself* these qualities, these states, and these acts. Its

¹¹ i.e., places itself in history or makes itself a history. Sartre uses *s'historialise*, which bears the same relation to French that "historicizes itself" bears to English. Tr.

unity of being would dissolve into a multiplicity of existents external to one another, the ontological problem of temporality would reappear, and this time we would have removed all methods of resolving it; for while it is possible for the for-itself to be its own past, it would be absurd to require of my joy that it be the sadness which preceded it, even in the mode of "non-being."

Psychologists give a degraded representation of this ekstastic existence when they affirm that psychic facts are relative to one another and that the thunder clap heard after a long silence is apprehended as "thunder-clap-after-a-long-silence." This observation is well made, but they have prevented themselves from explaining this relativity in succession since they have removed from it all ontological foundation. In fact if we apprehend the for-itself in its historicity, psychic duration vanishes and states, qualities, and acts disappear to give place to being-for-itself as such, which is only as the unique individuality from which the process of historization cannot be separated. It is this which flows, which calls to itself from the ground of the future, and which is heavy with the past which it was; it is this which historicizes its selfness, and we know that it is—in the primary or unreflective mode—a consciousness of the world and not of self. Thus qualities and states could not be beings in its being (in the sense that the unity of the flow of joy would be "contained" or "made" by consciousness). There exist only the internal, non-positional colorations of it; these are nothing other than itself qua for-itself, and they can not be apprehended outside of it.

Here we are then in the presence of two temporalities: the original temporality of which we are the temporalization, and psychic temporality which simultaneously appears as incompatible with the mode of being of our being and as an inter-subjective reality, the object of science, the goal of human acts (in the sense, for example, that I do everything possible to "make Annie love me," to "endow her with love for me"). This psychic temporality, which is evidently derived, can not stem directly from original temporality; the latter constitutes nothing other than itself. As for psychic temporality, it is incapable of constituting itself, for it is only a successive order of facts. Moreover psychic temporality could not appear to the unreflective for-itself, which is pure ekstastic presence to the world. Psychic temporality reveals itself to reflection, and reflection must constitute it. But how can reflection constitute it if reflection is the pure and simple discovery of the historicity which it is?

Here we must distinguish between pure reflection and impure or constituent reflection, for it is impure reflection which constitutes the succession of psychic facts or *psyche*. What is given first in daily life is impure or constituent reflection although this includes pure reflection as its original structure. But pure reflection can be attained only as the result of a modification which it effects on itself and which is in the form of a kathar-

sis. This is not the place to describe the motivation and the structure of this katharsis. What matters to us is the description of impure reflection inasmuch as it constitutes and reveals psychic temporality.

Reflection, as we have seen, is a type of being in which the for-itself is in order to be to itself what it is. Reflection is not then a capricious upsurge into the pure indifference of being, but it arises in the perspective of a for. We have seen here that the for-itself is the being which in its being is the foundation of a for. The meaning of reflection is then its being-for. Specifically the reflective is the reflected-on nihilating itself for¹² recovering itself. In this sense the reflective in so far as it has to be the reflected-on, escapes from the for-itself which it is as reflective in the form of "having to be it." But if it were only in order to be the reflected-on which it has to be, it would escape from the for-itself in order to rediscover it; everywhere and in whatever manner it affects itself, the for-itself is condemned to be-for-itself. In fact, it is here that pure reflection is discovered.

But impure reflection, which is the first spontaneous (but not the original) reflective movement, is-in-order-to-be the reflected-on as in-itself. Its motivation is within it in the twofold movement, which we have already described, of interiorization and of objectivation: to apprehend the reflected-on as in-itself in order to make itself be that in-itself which is apprehended. Impure reflection then is the apprehension of the reflected-on as such only in a circuit of selfness in which reflection stands in immediate relation with an in-itself which it has to be. But on the other hand, this in-itself which reflection has to be is the reflected-on in so far as the reflective tries to apprehend it as being in-itself. This means that three forms exist in impure reflection: the reflective, the reflected-on, and an in-itself which the reflective has to be in so far as this in-itself would be the reflected-on, an in-itself which is nothing other than the For of the reflective phenomenon. This in-itself is pre-outlined behind the for-itself—reflected-on, by a reflection (reflexion) which traverses the reflected-on in order to recover it and to found it; it is like the projection into the in-itself on the part of the for-itself reflected-on—as a meaning: its being is not to be but to be-made-to-be, like nothingness. It is the reflected-on as a pure object for the reflective, as soon as reflection adopts a point of view on the reflective, as soon as it gets out of that lightning intuition without relief in which the reflected-on is given without a point of view for the reflective, as soon as it posits itself as not being the reflected-on, and as soon as it determines what the-reflected-on is, then reflection effects the appearance of an in-itself capable of being determined, qualified, behind the reflected-on. This transcendent in-itself or shadow cast by the reflected-on onto being is what the reflective has to be in so far as it is that which the reflected-on is.

¹² *Être-pour*. In French the *pour* can mean either for or in order to, both of which are implied in *être-pour*. Tr.

Yet this in-itself should not be confused with the *value* of the reflected-on, which is given to reflection in a total, undifferentiated intuition—nor with the *value* which haunts the reflective as a non-thetic absence and as the *For* of reflective consciousness in so far as it is a non-positional self-consciousness. This in-itself is the necessary object of all reflection. In order that it may arise, it is enough that reflection confront the reflected-on as object. It is the very decision by which reflection determines itself to consider the reflected-on as object which causes the in-itself to appear as the transcendent objectivation of the reflected-on. The act by which reflection determines itself to take the reflected-on as object is itself (1) a positing of the reflective as *not being* the reflected-on, (2) the adoption of a point of view in relation to the reflected-on. Moreover in reality these two moments make only one since the concrete negation which the reflective makes itself be in relation to the reflected-on manifests itself precisely *in and through* the fact of taking a point of view. The objectivating act, as we see, lies in the strict extensions of the reflective dissociation since this dissociation is made by the deepening of the nothingness which separates the reflection (*reflet*) from the reflecting (*reflétant*). The objectivation recovers the reflective movement as *not being* the reflected-on *in order that* the reflected-on may appear as an object for the reflective.

However this reflection is in bad faith. To be sure, it appears to cut the bond which unites the reflected-on to the reflective, and it seems to declare that the reflective is *not* the reflected-on in the mode of *not being* what one is not, at a time when in the original reflective upsurge, the reflective is *not* the reflected-on in the mode of what one is. But this is only *in order* to recover subsequently the affirmation of identity and to affirm concerning this in-itself that "I am it." In a word, reflection is in bad faith in so far as it constitutes itself as the revelation of the *object which I make-to-be-me*. But in the second place this more radical nihilation is not a real, metaphysical event. The real event, the third process of nihilation is the *for-others*. Impure reflection is an abortive effort on the part of the *for-itself to be another while remaining itself*. The transcendent object which appeared behind the *for-itself-reflected-on* is the only being of which the reflective can say—in this sense—that *it is not it*. But it is a mere shadow of being. It is *made-to-be* and the reflective has to be it in order not to be it. It is this shadow of being, the necessary and constant correlate of impure reflection that the psychologist studies under the name of *psychic fact*. A psychic fact is then the shadow of the reflected-on inasmuch as the reflective has to be it ekstatically in the mode of *non-being*. Thus reflection is impure when it gives itself as an "intuition of the *for-itself* in in-itself." What is revealed to it is not the temporal and non-substantial historicity of the reflected-on; beyond this reflected-on it is the very substantiality of the organized forms of the flow. The unity of these virtual beings is called the *psychic life* or *psyche*, a virtual

and transcendent in-itself which underlies the temporalization of the for-itself. Pure reflection is never anything but a quasi-knowledge; but there can be a reflective knowledge of the Psyche alone. Naturally we will re-discover in each psychic object the characteristics of the real reflected-on but degraded in the In-itself. A brief a priori description of the Psyche will enable us to account for this In-itself.

(1) By Psyche we understand the *Ego*, its states, its qualities, and its acts. The *Ego* with the double grammatical form of "I" and "Me" represents our person as a transcendent psychic unity. We have described it elsewhere. It is as the *Ego* that we are subjects in fact and subjects in theory, active and passive, voluntary agents, possible objects of a judgment concerning value of responsibility.

The qualities of the *Ego* represent the ensemble of virtues, latent traits, potentialities which constitute our character and our habits (in the sense of the Greek *ἕξις*). The *Ego* is a "quality" of being angry, industrious, jealous, ambitious, sensual, etc. But we must recognize also qualities of another sort which have their origin in our history and which we call *acquired traits*: I can be "showing my age," *tired, bitter, declining, progressing*; I can appear as "having acquired assurance as the result of a success" or on the contrary as "having little by little contracted the tastes, the habits, the sexuality of an invalid" (following a long illness).

States—in contrast with qualities which exist "potentially"—give themselves as actually existing. Hate, love, jealousy are states. An illness, in so far as it is apprehended by the patient as a psycho-physiological reality, is a state. In the same way a number of characteristics which are externally attached to my person can, in so far as I live them, become *states*. Absence (in relation to a definite person), exile, dishonor, triumph are states. We can see what distinguishes the quality from the state: After my anger yesterday, my "irascibility" survives as a simple latent disposition to become angry. On the contrary, after Pierre's action and the resentment which I felt because of it, my hate survives as an actual reality although my thought may be currently occupied with another object. A quality furthermore is an innate or acquired disposition which contributes to *quality* my personality. The state, on the contrary, is much more accidental and contingent; it is *something which happens to me*. There exist however intermediates between states and qualities: for example, the hatred of Pozzo di Borgo for Napoleon although existing in fact and representing an affective, contingent relation between Pozzo and Napoleon the First, was constitutive of the person Pozzo.

By acts we must understand the whole synthetic activity of the person; that is, every disposition of means as related to ends, not as the for-itself is its own possibilities but as the act represents a transcendent psychic synthesis which the for-itself must live. For example, the boxer's training is an act because it transcends and supports the For-itself, which more-

over realizes itself in and through this training. The same goes for the research of the scientist, for the work of the artist, for the election campaign of the politician. In all these cases the act as a psychic being represents a transcendent existence and the objective aspect of the relation of the For-itself with the world.

(2) The "Psychic" is given solely to a special category of cognitive acts—the acts of the reflective For-itself. On the unreflective plane, in fact, the For-itself is its own possibilities in the non-thetic mode; and since its possibilities are possible presences to the world beyond the given state of the world, what is revealed thetically but non-thematically across these possibilities is a state of the world synthetically bound with the given state. Consequently the modifications to be imposed on the world are given thetically in present things as objective potentialities which have to realize themselves by borrowing our body as the instrument of their realization. It is thus that the man who is angry sees on the face of his opponent the objective quality of asking for a punch in the nose. Hence we have such expressions as "itching to be spanked" or "asking for trouble."¹³ Our body here is like a medium in a trance. Through it must be realized a certain potentiality of things (a beverage-about-to-be-drunk, aid-about-to-be-brought, dangerous-animal-about-to-be-killed, etc.), and reflection arising in the midst of all these apprehends the ontological relation of the For-itself to its possibilities but as an *object*. Thus the act rises as the virtual object of the reflective consciousness. It is then impossible for me at the same time and on the same level to be conscious of Pierre and of my friendship for him; these two existences are always separated by the breadth of the For-itself. And this For-itself is a hidden reality; in the case of consciousness not-reflected-on, the For-itself is but nonthetically, and it is effaced before the object in the world and its potentialities. In the case of the reflective upsurge the for-itself is surpassed toward the virtual object which the reflective has to be. Only a pure reflective consciousness can discover the For-itself reflected-on in its reality. We use the term *Psyche* for the organized totality of these virtual and transcendent existents which form a permanent cortege for impure reflection and which are the natural object of *psychological* research.

(3) The objects although virtual are not abstract; the reflective does not aim at them in emptiness; they are given as the concrete in-itself which the reflective has to be beyond the reflected-on. We shall use the term *evidence* for the immediate presence "in person" of hate, exile, systematic doubt in the reflective For-itself. To be convinced that this

¹³ The French expressions here have no close English equivalent. "*Tête à gifles*" is a "head for slaps"; "*menton qui attire les coups*" is a "chin which attracts blows." Cf. Goneril's taunt in *King Lear*:

"Milk-liver'd man!
That bears't a cheek for blows, a head for wrongs."
(IV.ii) Tr.

presence exists, it is enough to call to mind cases in our own personal experience when we have tried to recall a dead love or a certain intellectual atmosphere which we had lived at an earlier date. On such occasions we had plainly a consciousness of aiming in emptiness at these various objects. We could form particular concepts of them, attempt a literary description of them, but we knew that they were not there. Similarly there are intermittent periods for a living love during which we know that we love but we do not feel it. These "intermittences in the heart" have been very well described by Proust. In contrast, it is possible to grasp a love in fullness, to contemplate it. But for that is necessary a particular mode of being on the part of the For-itself reflected-on. I can apprehend my friendship for Pierre, but it is through my sympathy, which at the moment has become the object reflected-on by a reflective consciousness. In short, the only way to make-present these qualities, these states, or these acts is to apprehend them across a consciousness reflected-on of which they are the objectivation, the shadow cast onto the in-itself.

But this possibility of making-present a love proves better than any argument the transcendence of the psychic. When I abruptly discover, when I see my love, I apprehend at the same stroke that it stands before my consciousness. I can take points of view regarding it, can judge it; I am not engaged in it as the reflective is in the reflected-on. Due to this very fact I apprehend it as not being of the nature of the For-itself. It is infinitely heavier, more opaque, more solid than that absolute transparency. That is why the evidence with which the psychic gives itself to the intuition of impure reflection is not apodictic. There is a cleavage between the future of the For-itself reflected-on, which is constantly eaten away and lightened by my freedom, and the dense and menacing future of my love, a cleavage which gives to it precisely its meaning as love. If I did not apprehend in the psychic object a love with its future arrested, would it still be love? Would it not rather fall under the heading of caprice? And does not even the caprice engage the future to the extent that it is given as going to remain caprice and never to be changed into love? Thus the always nihilated future of the For-itself prevents all determination in-itself within the For-itself as the For-itself which loves or which hates; and the shadow projected by the For-itself reflected-on possesses naturally a degraded future in in-itself, one which forms an integral part of it in determining its meaning. But in correlation with the continual nihilation of Futures reflected-on, the organized psychic ensemble with its future remains only *probable*. And we need not understand by that an external quality which would come from a relation with my knowledge and which could be transformed if need be into certainty, but rather an ontological characteristic.

(4) The psychic object, being the shadow cast by the For-itself reflected-on, possesses in degraded form the characteristics of consciousness. In

particular it appears as an unachieved and probable totality there where the For-itself makes itself exist in the diasporatic unity of a detotalized totality. This means that the Psychic apprehended across the three ekstatic dimensions of temporality, appears as constituted by the synthesis of a Past, a Present, and a Future. A love, an enterprise is the organized unity of these three dimensions. In fact it is not enough to say that a love "has" a future as if the future were external to the object which it characterizes; the future makes a part of the organized form of the flow of "love," for love is given its meaning as love by its being in the future. But due to the fact that the psychic object is in-itself, its present can not be flight, nor can its future be pure possibility. In these forms of flow there is an essential priority of the Past, which is what the For-itself was and which already presupposes the transformation of the For-itself into In-itself. The reflective projects a psychic object provided with the three temporal dimensions, but it constitutes these three dimensions solely out of what the reflected-on was. The Future is already; otherwise how could my love be love? Only it is not yet given; it is a "now" which is not yet revealed. It loses then its character as a possibility which-I-have-to-be; my love, my joy do not have to be their future, for they are it in the tranquil indifference of juxtaposition, just as this fountain pen is at once a pen and—below—a cap. The Present similarly is apprehended in its real quality of being-there. Only this being-there is constituted in having been-there. The Present is already wholly constituted and armed from head to foot; it is a "now" which the instant brings and carries away like a costume ready made; it is a card which comes out of the game and returns to it. The passage of a "now" from the future to the present and from the present to the past does not cause it to undergo any modification since in any case, future or not, it is already past. This fact is well illustrated by the naive way in which psychologists take recourse in the unconscious in order to distinguish the three "nows" of the psychic: they call present the "now" which is present to the consciousness. Those which have passed into the future have exactly the same characteristics, but they wait in the limbo of the unconscious; and if we take them in that undifferentiated environment, it is impossible to distinguish past from future among them. A memory which survives in the unconscious is a past "now" and at the same time, inasmuch as it awaits being evoked, it is a future "now." Thus the psychic form is not to-be; it is already made; it is already complete, past, present, future, in the mode *has been*. The "nows" which compose it have only to undergo one by one—before returning into the past—the baptism of consciousness.

The result is that the psychic form contains two co-existing contradictory modalities of being since it is *already made* and appears in the cohesive unity of an organism and since at the same time it can exist only through a succession of "nows," each one of which tends to be isolated

in an in-itself. This joy, for example, passes from one instant to another because its future exists already as a terminal result and the given meaning of its development, not as that which it has to be, but as that which it "has been" already in the future.

Actually this inner cohesion of the psyche is nothing other than the unity of being of the For-itself hypostasized in the in-itself. A hate has no parts; it is not a sum of attitudes and of states of consciousness, but it gives itself through the attitudes and states of consciousness as the temporal unity—without parts—of their appearances. But the unity of being in the For-itself is explained by the ekstastic character of its being; it has to be in full spontaneity what it will be. The psychic, on the contrary, "is made-to-be." This means that it is by itself incapable of determining itself in existence. It is sustained in the face of the reflective by a sort of inertia; and psychologists have often insisted on its "pathological" character. It is in this sense that Descartes can speak of the "passions of the soul." Although the psychic is not on the same plane of being as the existents of the world, this inertia enables the psychic to be apprehended as related to these existents. A love is given as "aroused" by the loved object. Consequently the total cohesion of the psychic form becomes unintelligible since it does not have to be this cohesion, since it is not its own synthesis, since its unity has the character of a given. To the extent that a hatred is a given succession of "nows," all completely formed and inert, we find in it the germ of an infinite divisibility. And yet this divisibility is disguised, denied in so far as the psychic is the objectivation of the ontological unity of the For-itself. Hence there is a sort of magic cohesion between the successive "nows" of the hatred, which give themselves as parts only in order later to deny their exteriority.

The ambiguity is brought to light in Bergson's theory of the consciousness which endures and which is a "multiplicity of interpenetration." What Bergson is touching on here is the psychic state, not consciousness conceived as For-itself. Actually what is the meaning of "interpenetration?" On the theory of divisibility, it cannot be absence. If there is to be interpenetration, it is necessary that there be parts which interpenetrate each other. But these parts, which theoretically ought to fall back into their isolation, flow one into the other by a magic and totally unexplained cohesion; and this total fusion at present defies analysis. Bergson does not dream of establishing this property of the psychic on an absolute structure of the For-itself. He establishes it as a given, a simple "intuition" which reveals to him that the psychic is an interiorized multiplicity. Its character as something inert, as a passive datum is accentuated by the fact that it exists without *being* for a consciousness, either thetic or non-thetic. It is without consciousness (of) being since a natural attitude man completely fails to recognize it and has to have recourse to intuition in order to apprehend it. Thus an object in the world is able to exist without

being seen and to reveal itself after the event when we have forged the necessary instruments to disclose it. The characteristics of psychic duration for Bergson are a pure contingent fact of experience; they are so because we find them so—that is all. Thus psychic temporality is an inert *datum*, closely akin to Bergson's duration, which undergoes its intimate cohesion without effecting it, which is perpetually temporalized without temporalizing itself, in which the irrational and magic interpenetration of elements that are not united by an ekstastic relation of being can be compared only to sympathetic magic acting from a distance—an interpenetration which hides a multiplicity of already formed "nows." These characteristics do not result from any error on the part of psychologists or from a lack of knowledge; they are constitutive of psychic temporality, which is the hypostasis of original temporality. The absolute unity of the psychic is indeed the projection of the ontological, ekstastic unity of the for-itself. But since this projection is made in the in-itself which is what it is in the distanceless proximity of self-identity, the ekstastic unity parcels itself out in an infinity of "nows" which are what they are and which, precisely for this reason, tend to isolate themselves in their self-identity. Thus participating simultaneously in the in-itself and in the for-itself, psychic temporality conceals a contradiction which is never overcome. This should not surprise us. Since psychic temporality is the product of impure reflection, it is natural that it is made-to-be what it is not and that it is not what it is made-to-be.

Following this analysis we may now find more meaningful an examination of the inter-relations of psychic forms at the heart of psychic time. Let us note first of all that it is interpenetration which governs the connection between feelings, for example, at the heart of a complex psychic form. Everybody knows those feelings of affection "tinted" with envy, those hates "penetrated" despite all by admiration, those romantic friendships which novelists have often described. There is certainly interpenetration as soon as we apprehend a friendship tinted with envy like a cup of coffee clouded with cream. Admittedly this comparison is gross. Nevertheless it is certain that the amorous friendship is not given as a simple specification of the genus friendship, as the isosceles triangle is a specification of the genus triangle. The friendship is given as wholly penetrated by total love, and yet it is not love; it "does not make itself" love, for then it would lose its autonomy as friendship. But it constitutes itself as an inert object in-itself which language can scarcely name, where love, autonomous and in-itself, is magically extended through all the friendship just as the foot is extended through all the sea in the Stoic *σύγχυσις*.¹⁴

But psychic processes imply also the action from a distance of prior forms on posterior forms. We cannot conceive of this action at a distance in the mode of simple causality found, for example, in classical mechan-

¹⁴ Correction for Sartre's *σύγχυσις* Tr.

ics, which supposes the totally inert existence of a moving body enclosed in the instant. Neither can we allow the mode of physical causality conceived in the manner of John Stuart Mill, which is defined by the constant and unconditioned succession of two states where the being of each one is exclusive of the other. Inasmuch as the psychic is the objectivation of the for-itself, it possesses a degraded spontaneity which is grasped as the internal, given quality of the form of the psychic and which is inseparable from its cohesive force. This spontaneity can not therefore be given strictly as produced by the prior form. But on the other hand, neither can the spontaneity determine itself in existence since it is apprehended only as one determination among others of a given existent. It follows that the prior form has to effect from a distance the birth of a form of the same nature which is organized spontaneously as a form of flow. We are not dealing here with being which has to be its future and its past, but only with successions of past, present, and future forms which all exist in the mode of "having-been," and which at a distance influence one another. This influence will be manifested either by penetration or by motivation. If it is by penetration, the reflective apprehends as a single object two psychic objects which had at first been given separately. The result is a new psychic object, each characteristic of which will be the synthesis of the prior two, though this object is unintelligible in itself and gives itself simultaneously as all one and all the other without there being any alteration in either. In motivation, on the contrary, the two objects remain each at its own place. But since a psychic object is an organized form and a multiplicity of interpenetration, it can act only simultaneously as one whole on another whole object. The result is a total action at a distance by means of a magic influence of one on the other. For example, my humiliation of yesterday is the total motive for my mood this morning, etc.

The fact that this action at a distance is totally magic and irrational proves better than any analysis the futility of attempts on the part of intellectualistic psychologists to remain on the level of the psychic and yet deduce this action to an intelligible causality by means of an intellectual analysis. It is thus that Proust by means of intellectualistic distinctions is perpetually trying to find bonds of rational causality between psychic states in the temporal succession of these states. But at the end of the analysis he can offer us only results such as the following:

As soon as Swann could picture (Odette) to himself without revulsion, as soon as he thought again of the kindness in her smile, and as soon as the desire to take her away from everyone else was no longer added to his love by jealousy, that love became again a taste for the sensations which Odette's person gave him, for the pleasure which he felt in admiring as a spectacle or in questioning as a phenomenon the lifting up of one of her glances, the formation of one of her smiles,

the utterance of an intonation of her voice. And this pleasure different from all others *had ended by creating in him a need of her*, which she alone could assuage by her presence or her letters. . . . Thus *by the very chemistry of his affliction*, after having created *jealousy out of his love*, he began to *manufacture tenderness, pity for Odette*.¹⁵

This passage is obviously concerned with the psychic. We see feelings which, individualized and separated by nature, are here acting one on the other. But Proust is trying to clarify their actions and to classify them in the hope that he may thereby make understandable the fluctuations which Swann experiences. Proust does not limit himself to describing the conclusions which he himself has been able to make (e.g., the transition through "oscillation" from hate-filled jealousy to tender love); he wants to explain these findings.

What are the results of this analysis? Is the unintelligibility of the psychic removed? It is easy to see that on the contrary this somewhat arbitrary reduction of the great psychic forms to more simple elements accentuates the magic irrationality of the inter-relations which psychic objects support. How does jealousy "add" to love the "desire to take her away from everyone else?" And how does this desire once added to love (always the image of the cloud of cream "added" to the coffee) prevent it from becoming again "a taste for the sensations which Odette's person gave him?" And how can the pleasure create a need? And how does love *manufacture* that jealousy which in return *will add to love the desire to take Odette away from everyone else?* And how when freed from this desire, is it going to *manufacture tenderness anew?* Proust here attempts to constitute a symbolic chemistry, but the chemical images which he uses are capable only of disguising the motivations and irrational acts. It is an attempt to draw us toward a mechanistic interpretation of the psychic which, without being any more intelligible, would completely distort its nature. And yet Proust cannot keep from showing us between the estranged states almost interhuman relations (to create, to manufacture, to add), which would almost allow us to suppose that these psychic objects are animated agents. In his descriptions the intellectualistic analysis shows its limitations at every instant; it can effect its distinctions and its classifications only superficially and on the basis of total irrationality. It is necessary to give up trying to reduce the irrational element in psychic causality. This causality is a degradation of the ekstastic for-itself, which is its own being at a distance from itself, its degradation into magic, into an in-itself which is what it is at its own place. Magic action through influence at a distance is the necessary result of this relaxation of the bonds of being. The psychologist must describe these irrational bonds and take them as an original given of the psychic world.

¹⁵ *Du côté de chez Swann*, 37^e edition, II, p. 82. My italics.

Thus the reflective consciousness is constituted as consciousness of duration, and hence psychic duration appears to consciousness. This psychic temporality as a projection into the in-itself of original temporality is a virtual being whose phantom flow does not cease to accompany the ekstastic temporalization of the for-itself in so far as this is apprehended by reflection. But psychic temporality disappears completely if the for-itself remains on the un-reflective level or if impure reflection purifies itself. Psychic temporality is similar in this respect to original temporality—in that it appears as a mode of being of concrete objects and not as a limit or a pre-established rule. Psychic time is only the connected bringing together of temporal objects. But its essential difference from original temporality is that it is while original temporality temporalizes itself. As such psychic time can be constituted only with the past, and the future can be only as a past which will come after the present past; that is, the empty form before-after is hypostasized, and it orders the relations between objects equally past.

At the same time this psychic duration which can not be by itself must perpetually be *made-to-be*. Perpetually oscillating between the multiplicity of juxtaposition and the absolute cohesion of the ekstastic for-itself, this temporality is composed of “nows” which have been, which remain at the place which has been assigned to them, but which influence each other at a distance in their totality; it is this which renders it comparable to the magic duration of Bergson’s philosophy. As soon as we enter on the plane of impure reflection—that is, of the reflection which seeks to determine the being which I am—an entire world appears which peoples this temporality. This world, a virtual presence, the probable object of my reflective intention, is the psychic world or the psyche. In one sense, its existence is purely ideal; in another it is, since it is *made-to-be*, since it is revealed to consciousness. It is “my shadow;” it is what is revealed to me when I wish to see myself. In addition this phantom world exists as a *real situation* of the for-itself, for it can be that in terms of which the for-itself determines itself to be what it has to be. For example, I shall not go to this or that person’s house “because of” the antipathy which I feel toward him. Or I decide on this or that action by taking into consideration my hate or my love. Or I refuse to discuss politics because I know my quick temper and I can not risk becoming irritated. Along with that transcendent world which is lodged in the infinite becoming of pre-historic indifference there is constituted precisely as a virtual unity of being that temporality which is called “inner” or “qualitative,” which is the objectivation in in-itself of original temporality. In this inner temporality we find the first outline of an “outside;” the for-itself sees itself almost as bestowing an outside on its own eyes, but this outside is purely virtual. We shall see later how being-for-others realizes the suggestion of this “outside.”

CHAPTER THREE

Transcendence

IN order to arrive at as complete a description as possible of the for-itself we chose as a guiding thread the examination of negative attitudes. As we have seen, all questions which we can pose and the replies which can be made to them are conditioned by the permanent possibility of non-being, outside us and within. Our original goal, however, was not only to discover the negative structures of the for-itself. In the Introduction we encountered a problem, and it is this problem which we have wished to resolve: what is the original relation of human reality to the being of phenomena or being-in-itself? In the Introduction indeed we were obliged to reject both the realist solution and the idealist solution. It appeared to us both that transcendent being could not act on consciousness and that consciousness could not "construct" the transcendent by objectivizing elements borrowed from its subjectivity. Consequently we concluded that the original relation to being could not be an external relation which would unite two substances originally isolated. "The relation of the regions of being is a primitive upsurge," we said, "and it forms a part of the very structure of these beings." The concrete is revealed to us as the synthetic totality of which consciousness, like the phenomenon, constitutes only the articulations.

But although in one sense consciousness considered in isolation is an abstraction, and although phenomena—even the phenomenon of being—are similarly abstract in so far as they cannot exist as phenomena without *appearing* to a consciousness, nevertheless the being of phenomena as in an in-itself which is what it is can not be considered as an abstraction. In order to be, it needs only itself; it refers only to itself. On the other hand, our description of the for-itself has shown us how this on the contrary, is removed as far as possible from a substance and from the in-itself; we have seen that it is its own nothingness and that it can exist only in the ontological unity of its ekstases. Therefore while the relation of the for-itself to the in-itself is originally constitutive of the very being which is put into the relation, we should not understand that this relation

is constitutive of the in-itself but rather of the for-itself. It is in the for-itself alone that we must look for the key to that relation to being which we call, for example, knowing. The for-itself is responsible in its being for its relation with the in-itself, or if you prefer, it produces itself originally on the foundation of a relation to the in-itself. This is what we already anticipated when we defined consciousness as "a being such that in its being, its being is in question in so far as this being implies a being other than itself." But since formulating this definition we have acquired new knowledge. In particular we have grasped the profound meaning of the for-itself as the foundation of its own nothingness. Is it not time now to utilize this knowledge to determine and explain that ekstastic relation of the for-itself to the in-itself on the foundation of which knowing and acting in general can appear? Are we not in a position now to reply to our original question? In order to be non-thetic self-consciousness, consciousness must be a thetic consciousness of something, as we have noted. But what we have studied hitherto is the for-itself as the original mode of being of non-thetic self-consciousness. Are we not therefore bound to describe the relations of the for-itself with the in-itself inasmuch as these are constitutive of the very being of the for-itself? Are we not able at present to find the answer to questions of the following type: Since the in-itself is what it is, how and why does the being of the for-itself have to be a knowledge of the in-itself? And what in general is knowledge?

I. KNOWLEDGE AS A TYPE OF RELATION BETWEEN THE FOR-ITSELF AND THE IN-ITSELF

THERE is only intuitive knowledge. Deduction and discursive argument, incorrectly called examples of knowing, are only instruments which lead to intuition. When intuition is reached, methods utilized to attain it are effaced before it; in cases where it is not attained, reason and argument remain as indicating signs which point toward an intuition beyond reach; finally if it has been attained but is not a present mode of my consciousness, the precepts which I use remain as the results of operations formerly effected, like what Descartes called the "memories of ideas." If someone asks for a definition of intuition, Husserl will reply, in agreement with the majority of philosophers, that it is the presence of the thing (*Sache*) "in person" to consciousness. Knowledge therefore is of the type of being which we described in the preceding chapter under the title of "presence to —." But we have established that the in-itself can never by itself be presence. Being-present, in fact, is an ekstastic mode of being of the for-itself. We are then compelled to reverse the terms of our definition: intuition is the presence of consciousness to the thing. Therefore we must return now to the problem of the nature and the meaning of this presence of the for-itself to being.

In the Introduction while using the still not elucidated concept of "consciousness," we establish the necessity for consciousness to be consciousness of something. In fact it is by means of that of which it is conscious that consciousness distinguishes itself in its own eyes and that it can be self-consciousness; a consciousness which would not be consciousness (of) something would be consciousness (of) nothing. But at present we have elucidated the ontological meaning of consciousness or the for-itself. We can therefore pose the problem in more precise terms and ask: What do we mean when we say that it is necessary for consciousness to-be-consciousness of something—considered on the ontological level; i.e., in the perspective of being-for-itself?

We know that the for-itself is the foundation of its own nothingness in the form of the phantom dyad—the reflection-reflecting. The reflecting exists only in order to reflect the reflection, and the reflection is a reflection only in so far as it refers to the reflecting. Thus the two terms outlined in the dyad point to each other, and each engages its being in the being of the other. But if the reflecting is nothing other than the reflecting of *this* reflection, and if the reflection can be characterized only by its "being-in-order-to-be reflected in *this* reflecting," then the two terms of the quasi-dyad support their two nothingnesses on each other, conjointly annihilating themselves. It is necessary that the reflecting reflect *something* in order that the ensemble should not dissolve into nothing. But if the reflection, on the other hand, were *something*, independent of its being-in-order-to-be-reflected, then it would necessarily be qualified not as a reflection but as an in-itself. This would be to introduce opacity into the system "the-reflection-reflecting" and, even more, to complete the suggested scissiparity. For in the for-itself the reflection is *also* the reflecting. But if the reflection is qualified, it is separated from the reflecting and its appearance is separated from its reality; the *cogito* becomes impossible. The reflection can be simultaneously "something to be reflected" and *nothing*, but only if it makes itself qualified by something other than itself or, if you prefer, if it is reflected as a relation to an outside which it is not.

What defines the reflection for the reflecting is always *that to which it is presence*. Even a joy, apprehended on the unreflective level, is only the "reflected" presence to a laughing and open world full of happy perspectives. But the few preceding comments have already informed us that non-being is an essential structure of presence. Presence incloses a radical negation as presence to that which one is not. What is present to me is what is not me. We should note furthermore that this "non-being" is implied *a priori* in every theory of knowledge. It is impossible to construct the notion of an object if we do not have originally a negative relation designating the object as that which is not consciousness. This is what made it quite easy to use the expression "non-ego," which was

the fashion for a time, although one could not detect on the part of those who employed it the slightest concern to found this "not" which originally qualified the external world. Actually neither the connection of representation, nor the necessity of certain subjective ensembles, nor temporal irreversibility, nor an appeal to infinity could serve to constitute the object as such (that is, to serve as foundation for a further negation which would separate out the non-ego and oppose it to me as such) if this negation were not given first and if it were not the a priori foundation of all experience.

The thing, before all comparison, before all construction, is that which is present to consciousness as *not being* consciousness. The original relation of presence as the foundation of knowledge is negative. But as negation comes to the world by means of the for-itself, and as the thing is what it is in the absolute indifference of identity, it can not be the thing which is posited as not being the for-itself. Negation comes from the for-itself. We should not conceive this negation as a type of judgment which would bear on the thing itself and deny concerning it that it is the for-itself; this type of negation could be conceived only if the for-itself were a substance already fully formed, and even in that case it could emanate only as a third being establishing from outside a negative relation between two beings. But by the original negation the for-itself constitutes itself as *not being* the thing. Consequently the definition of consciousness which we gave earlier can be formulated in the perspective of the for-itself as follows: "The for-itself is a being such that in its being, its being is in question in so far as this being is essentially a certain way of *not being* a being which it posits simultaneously as other than itself."

Knowledge appears then as a mode of being. Knowing is neither a relation established after the event between two beings, nor is it an activity of one of these two beings, nor is it a quality of a property or a virtue. It is the very being of the for-itself in so far as this is presence to—; that is, in so far as the for-itself has to be its being by making itself not to be a certain being to which it is present. This means that the for-itself can be only in the mode of a reflection (reflet) causing itself to be reflected as not being a certain being. The "something" which must qualify the reflected in order that the dyad "the-reflection-reflecting" may not dissolve in nothingness is pure negation. The reflected causes itself to be qualified *outside* next to a certain being as *not being* that being. This is precisely what we mean by "to be consciousness of something."

But we must define more precisely what we understand by this original negation. Actually we should distinguish two types of negation: external negation and internal negation. The first appears as a purely external bond established between two beings by a witness. When I say, for example, "A cup is not an inkwell," it is very evident that the foundation

of this negation is neither in the cup nor in the inkwell.¹ Both of these objects are what they are, and that is all. The negation stands as a categorical and ideal connection which I establish between them without modifying them in any way whatsoever, without enriching them or impoverishing them with the slightest quality; they are not even ever slightly grazed by this negative synthesis. As it serves neither to enrich them nor to constitute them, it remains strictly external. But we can already guess the meaning of the other type of negation if we consider such expressions as "I am not rich" or "I am not handsome." Pronounced with a certain melancholy, they do not mean only that the speaker is denied a certain quality but that the denial itself comes to influence the inner structure of the positive being who has been denied the quality. When I say, "I am not handsome," I do not limit myself to denying with respect to myself taken as wholly concrete, a certain virtue which due to this fact passes into nothingness while I keep intact the positive totality of my being (as when I say, "The vase is not white, it is gray"—"The inkwell is not on the table, it is on the mantelpiece"). I intend to indicate that "not being handsome" is a certain negative virtue of my being. It characterizes me within; as negative it is a real quality of myself—that of not being handsome—and this negative quality will explain my melancholy as well as, for example, my failures in the world.

By an internal negation we understand such a relation between two beings that the one which is denied to the other qualifies the other at the heart of its essence—by absence. The negation becomes then a bond of essential being since at least one of the beings on which it depends is such that it points toward the other, that it carries the other in its heart as an absence. Nevertheless it is clear that this type of negation can not be applied to being-in-itself. By nature it belongs to the for-itself. Only the for-itself can be determined in its being by a being which it is not. And if the internal negation can appear in the world—as when we say of a pearl that it is false, of a fruit that it is not ripe, of an egg that it is not fresh, etc.—it is by the for-itself that it comes into the world—like negation in general. Knowing belongs to the for-itself alone, for the reason that only the for-itself can appear to itself as not being what it knows. And as here appearance and being are one—since the for-itself has to be its appearance—we must conclude that the for-itself includes within its being the being of the object which it is not inasmuch as the for-itself puts its own being into question as not being the being of the object.

Here we must rid ourselves of an illusion which may be formulated as follows: in order to constitute myself as *not being* a particular being, I must have ahead of time in some manner or other a knowledge of this being; for I can not judge the differences between myself and a being

¹ Sartre's text reads "the foundation of this negation is neither in the table nor in the inkwell." The "table" is surely an error. Tr.

of which I know nothing. It is true, of course, that in our empirical existence we can not know how we differ from a Japanese or an Englishman, from a worker or an employer until we have some notion of these different beings. But these empirical distinctions can not serve as a basis for us here, for we are undertaking the study of an ontological relation which must render all experience possible and which aims at establishing how in general an object can exist for consciousness. It is not possible then for me to have any experience of an object as an object which is not me until I constitute it as an object. On the contrary, what makes all experience possible is an *a priori* upsurge of the object for the subject—or since the upsurge is the original fact of the for-itself, an original upsurge of the for-itself as presence to the object which it is not. What we should do then is to invert the terms of the preceding formula and formulate it thus: the fundamental relation by which the for-itself has to be as not being *this* particular object to which it is present is the foundation of all knowledge of this being. But we must describe this primary relation more exactly if we want to make it understandable.

The germ of truth remaining in the statement of the intellectualist illusion denounced in the preceding paragraph is the observation that I can not determine myself not to be an object which is originally severed from all connection with me. I can not deny that I am a particular being if I am at a distance from that being. If I conceive of a being entirely closed in on itself, this being in itself will be solely that which it is, and due to this fact there will be no room in it for either negation or knowledge. It is in fact in terms of the being which it is not that a being can make known to itself what it is not. This means in the case of an internal negation that it is within and upon the being which it is not that the for-itself appears as not being what it is not. In this sense the internal negation is a concrete ontological bond. We are not dealing here with one of those empirical negations in which the qualities denied are distinguished first by their absence or even by their non-being. In the internal negation the for-itself collapses on what it denies. The qualities denied are precisely those to which the for-itself is most present; it is from them that it derives its negative force and perpetually renews it. In this sense it is necessary to see the denied qualities as a constitutive factor of the being of the for-itself, for the for-itself must be there outside itself upon them; it must be *they* in order to deny that it is *they*. In short the term-of-origin of the internal negation is the in-itself, the thing which is *there*, and outside of it there is nothing except an emptiness, a nothingness which is distinguished from the thing only by a pure negation for which *this* thing furnishes the very content. The difficulty encountered by materialism in deriving knowledge from the object stems from the fact that materialism wants to produce a substance in terms of another substance. But this difficulty can not hinder us, for we affirm that there is *nothing* outside

the in-itself except a reflection (*reflet*) of that nothing which is itself polarized and defined by the in-itself inasmuch as it is precisely the nothingness of *this* in-itself, the individualized nothing which is nothing only because it is not the in-itself. Thus in this ekstastic relation which is constitutive of the internal negation and of knowledge, it is the in-itself "in person" which is the concrete pole in its plenitude, and the for-itself is nothing other than the emptiness in which the in-itself is detached.

The for-itself is outside itself in the in-itself since it causes itself to be defined by what it is not; the first bond between the in-itself and the for-itself is therefore a bond of being. But this bond is neither a lack nor an absence. In the case of absence indeed I make myself determined by a being which I am not and which does not exist or which is not there; that is, what determines me is like a hollow in the middle of what I shall call my empirical plenitude. On the other hand, in knowledge, taken as a bond of ontological being, the being which I am not represents the absolute plenitude of the in-itself. And I, on the contrary, am the nothingness, the absence which determines itself in existence from the standpoint of this fullness. This means that in that type of being which we call knowing, the only being which can be encountered and which is perpetually *there* is the known. The knower is not; he is not apprehensible. He is nothing other than that which brings it about that there is a *being-there* on the part of the known, a presence—for by itself the known is neither present nor absent, it simply is. But this presence of the known is presence to *nothing*, since the knower is the pure reflection of a non-being; the presence appears then across the total translucency of the knower known, an absolute presence.

A psychological and empirical exemplification of this original relation is furnished us in the case of *fascination*. In fascination, which represents the immediate fact of knowing, the knower is absolutely nothing but a pure negation; he does not find or recover himself anywhere—he is not. The only qualification which he can support is that he is not precisely this particular fascinating object. In fascination there is nothing more than a gigantic object in a desert world. Yet the fascinated intuition is in no way a fusion with the object. In fact the condition necessary for the existence of fascination is that the object be raised in absolute relief on a background of emptiness; that is, I am precisely the immediate negation of the object and nothing but that.

We find this same pure negation at the basis of those pantheistic intuitions which Rousseau has several times described as concrete psychic events in his history. He claims that on those occasions he *melted* into the universe, that the world alone was suddenly found present as an absolute presence and unconditioned totality. And certainly we can understand this total, isolated presence of the world, its pure "being-there;" certainly we admit freely that at this privileged moment there was nothing

else but the world. But this does not mean, as Rousseau claims, that there was a fusion of consciousness with the world. Such a fusion would signify the solidification of the for-itself in in-itself, and at the same stroke, the disappearance of the world and of the in-itself as presence. It is true that in the pantheistic intention there is no longer anything but the world—save for that which causes the in-itself to be present as the world; that is, a pure negation which is a non-thetic self-consciousness as negation. Precisely because knowledge is not absence but presence, there is *nothing* which separates the knower from the known.

Intuition has often been defined as the immediate presence of the known to the knower, but it is seldom that anyone has reflected on the requirements of the notion of the *immediate*. Immediacy is the absence of any mediator; that is obvious, for otherwise the mediator alone would be known and not what is mediated. But if we can not posit any intermediary, we must at the same time reject both continuity and discontinuity as a type of presence of the knower to the known. In fact we shall not admit that there is any continuity of the knower with the known, for it supposes an intermediary term which would be at once knower and known, which suppresses the autonomy of the knower in the face of the known while engaging the being of the knower in the being of the known. Then the structure of the object disappears since the object must be absolutely denied by the for-itself as the being of the for-itself. But neither can we consider the original relation of the for-itself to the in-itself as a relation of *discontinuity*. To be sure, the separation between two discontinuous elements is an emptiness—i.e., a *nothing*—but it is a realized nothing,—i.e., in-itself. This substantialized nothing is as such a non-conductive density; it destroys the immediacy of presence, for it has qua nothing become *something*. The presence of the for-itself to the in-itself can be expressed neither in terms of continuity nor in terms of discontinuity, for it is pure *denied identity*.

To make this clearer, let us employ a comparison. When two curves are tangential to one another, they offer a type of presence without intermediaries. Nevertheless the eye grasps only a *single line* for the length of their tangency. Moreover if the two curves were hidden so that one could see only the length A B where they are tangential to each other, it would be impossible to distinguish them. Actually what separates them is *nothing*; there is neither continuity nor discontinuity but pure identity. Now suddenly uncover the two figures and we apprehend them once again as being two throughout all their length. This situation derives not from an abrupt factual separation which would suddenly be realized between them but from the fact that the two movements by which we draw the two curves so as to perceive them include each one a negation as a constituting act. Thus what separates the two curves at the very spot of their tangency is *nothing*, not even a distance; it is a pure negativity

as the counterpart of a constituting synthesis. Such an image will enable us to understand better the relation of immediacy which originally unites the knower to the known.

Ordinarily indeed it happens that a negation depends on a "something" which exists before the negation and constitutes its matter. For example, if I say that the inkwell is not the table, then table and inkwell are objects already constituted whose being in-itself will be the support of the negative judgment. But in the case of the relation "knower-known," there is nothing on the side of the knower which can provide a support for the negation; no difference, no principle of distinction "is there" to separate *in-itself* the knower from the known. But in the total indistinction of being, there is nothing but a negation which does not even exist but which *has to be*, which does not even posit itself as a negation. Consequently knowledge and finally the knower himself are nothing except the fact "that there is" being, that being in-itself gives itself and raises itself in relief on the ground of this nothing. In this sense we can call knowledge *the pure solitude of the known*. It is enough to say that the original phenomenon of knowledge adds nothing to being and creates nothing. It does not enrich being, for knowledge is pure negativity. It only brings it about that there is being. But this fact "that there is" being is not an inner determination of being—which is what it is—but of negativity. In this sense every revelation of a positive characteristic of being is the counterpart of an ontological determination as pure negativity in the being of the for-itself.

For example, as we shall see later, the revelation of the spatiality of being is one with the non-positional apprehension by the for-itself of itself as *unextended*. And the unextended character of the for-itself is not a positive, mysterious virtue of spirituality which is hiding under a negative denomination; it is a natural ekstastic relation, for it is by and in the extension of the transcendent in-itself that the for-itself makes itself known to itself and realizes its own non-extension. The for-itself can not be first unextended in order later to enter into relation with an extended being, for no matter how we consider it, the concept of the unextended makes no sense by itself; it is nothing but the negation of the extended. If we could suppress—to imagine an impossibility—the extension of the revealed determinations of the in-itself, then the for-itself would remain *aspatial*; it would be neither extended nor unextended, and it could not possibly be characterized in any way whatsoever so far as extension is concerned. In this sense extension is a transcendent determination which the for-itself has to apprehend to the exact degree that it denies itself as extended. That is why the term which seems best to indicate this inner relation between knowing and being is the word *realize*, which we used earlier in its double ontological and gnostic meaning. I realize a project in so far as I give it being, but I also *realize my situation in so far as*

I live it and make it be with my being. I "realize" the scope of a catastrophe, the difficulty of an undertaking. To know is to realize in both senses of the term. It is to cause being "to be there" while having to be the reflected negation of this being. *The real is realization.* We shall define transcendence as that inner and realizing negation which reveals the in-itself while determining the being of the for-itself.

II. DETERMINATION AS NEGATION

To what being is the for-itself presence? Let us note immediately that the question is badly phrased. Being is what it is; it can not possess in itself the determination "this one" to answer the question "which?" In short the question has meaning only if it is posited in a world. Consequently the for-itself can not be present to *this* being rather than to *that* since it is the presence of the for-itself which causes the existence of a "this" rather than a "that." Our examples, however, have shown us a for-itself denying concretely that it is a particular being. This situation arises from the fact that we described the relation of knowledge before bringing to light its structure of negativity. In this sense, by the very fact that it was revealed in examples, that negativity was already secondary. Negativity as original transcendence is not determined in terms of a *this*; it causes a *this* to exist.

The original presence of the for-itself is presence to being. Shall we say then that it is presence to *all* being? That would be to fall back into our former error. For totality can come to being only by the for-itself. A totality indeed supposes an internal relation of being between the terms of a quasi-multiplicity in the same way that a multiplicity supposes—in order to be this multiplicity—an inner totalizing relation among its elements. In this sense addition itself is a synthetic act. Totality can come to beings only by a being which has to be its own totality in their presence. This is precisely the case with the for-itself, a detotalized totality which temporalizes itself in a perpetual incompleteness. It is the for-itself in its presence to being which causes there to be an *all* of being. We must understand indeed that *this* particular being can be called *this* only on the ground of the presence of *all* being. That does not mean that *one* being needs *all* being in order to exist but that the for-itself realizes itself as a realizing presence to *this* being on the original ground of a realizing presence to *all*. But conversely since totality is an internal ontological relation of "thises," it can be revealed only in and through the individual "thises." That means that the for-itself as a realizing presence to *all* being realizes itself as a realizing presence to the "thises," and as a realizing presence to the "thises" it realizes itself as a realizing presence to *all* being. In other words, the presence of the for-itself to the world can be realized only by its presence to one or several particular things, and conversely its presence to a particu-

lar thing can be realized only on the ground of a presence to the world. Perception is articulated only on the ontological foundation of presence to the world, and the world is revealed concretely as the ground of each individual perception. It remains to explain how the upsurge of the for-itself in being can bring it about that there is an all and "thises."

The presence of the for-itself to being as totality comes from the fact that the for-itself has to be—in the mode of being what it is not and of not being what it is—its own totality as a detotalized totality. In so far as the for-itself makes itself be in the unity of a single upsurge as *all* which is not being, being stands before it as *all* which the for-itself is not. The original negation, in fact, is a radical negation. The for-itself, which stands before being as its own totality, is itself the whole of the negation and hence is the negation of the whole. Thus the achieved totality of the world is revealed as constitutive of the being of the unachieved totality by which the being of totality comes into being. It is through the world that the for-itself makes itself known to itself as a totality detotalized, which means that by its very upsurge the for-itself is a revelation of being as a totality inasmuch as the for-itself has to be its own totality in the detotalized mode. Thus the very meaning of the for-itself is outside in being, but it is through the for-itself that the meaning of being appears. This totalization of being adds *nothing* to being; it is nothing but the manner in which being is revealed as not being the for-itself, the manner in which *there* is being. It appears *outside the for-itself*, beyond all reach, as that which determines the for-itself in its being. But the fact of revealing being as a totality does not touch being any more than the fact of counting two cups on the table touches the existence or nature of either of them. Yet it is not a purely subjective modification of the for-itself since it causes all subjectivity to be possible. But if the for-itself is to be the nothingness whereby "there is" being, then being can exist originally only as totality. Thus knowledge is the world. To use Heidegger's expression, the world and outside of that—*nothing*. But this "nothing" is not originally that in which human reality emerges. This *nothing* is human reality itself as the radical negation by means of which the world is revealed. Of course the very apprehension of the world as totality causes the appearance *alongside the world* of a nothingness which sustains and encompasses this totality. In fact this nothingness as the absolute nothing which is left outside the totality even determines the totality. This is why the totalization adds nothing to being, for it is only the result of the appearance of nothingness as the limit of being. But this nothingness is not anything except human reality apprehending itself as excluded from being and perpetually beyond being, in commerce with nothing. It amounts to the same thing whether we say, human reality is that by which being is revealed as totality—or, human reality is that which causes *there* to be nothing outside of being. This nothing is the possibility for there to be a beyond-the-world such that

(1) this possibility reveals being as a world and (2) human reality has to be this possibility. As such, this nothing constitutes—along with the original presence to being—the circuit of selfness.

But human reality makes itself the unachieved totality of negations only in so far as it reaches beyond a concrete negation which it has to be as actual presence to being. If it were in fact a pure consciousness (of) being a syncretic and undifferentiated negation, it could not determine itself and therefore could not be a concrete totality, although detotalized, of its determinations. It is a totality only to the extent that through all its other negations it escapes the concrete negation which it is at present. Its being can be its own totality only to the extent that it is a surpassing toward the whole which it has to be, beyond the partial structure which it is. Otherwise it would simply be what it is and could in no way be considered as either a totality or a non-totality. In the sense then that a partial negative structure must appear on the ground of the undifferentiated negations which I am—and of which it forms a part—I make known to myself by means of being-in-itself a certain concrete reality which I have to not-be. The “this” is the being which I at present am not, in so far as it appears on the ground of the totality of being. *This* is what I at present am not inasmuch as I have to be nothing of being: it is what is revealed on the undifferentiated ground of being, to make known to me the concrete negation which I have to be on the totalizing ground of my negations.

This original relation between the all and the “this” is at the source of the relation between figure and ground which the “Gestalt theory” has brought to light. The “this” always appears on a ground; that is, on the undifferentiated totality of being inasmuch as the For-itself is the radical and syncretic negation of it. Yet it can always dissolve again into this undifferentiated totality when another “this” arises. But the appearance of the “this” or of the figure on the ground, since it is the correlate of the appearance of my own concrete negation on the syncretic ground of a radical negation, implies that I both am and am not that total negation or, if you prefer, that I am it in the mode of “non-being” and that I am not it in the mode of being. It is indeed only in this way that the present negation will appear on the ground of the radical negation which it is. Otherwise indeed the present negation would be entirely cut off or else it would be dissolved in the radical negation. The appearance of the *this* on the *all* is correlative with a certain way which the For-itself has of being the negation of itself. There is a *this* because I am not yet my future negations and because I am no longer my past negations. The revelation of the *this* supposes that the “accent is put” on a certain negation accompanied by the withdrawal of the others in the syncretic disappearance into the ground; that is, that the for-itself can exist only as a negation which is constituted on the withdrawal into totality of the

radical negativity. The For-itself is not the world, spatiality, permanence, matter, in short the in-itself in general, but its manner of not-being-them is to have to not-be this table, this glass, this room on the total ground of negativity. The *this* supposes then a negation of the negation—but a negation which has to be the radical negation which it denies, which does not cease reattaching itself to it by an ontological thread, and which remains ready to dissolve in the radical negation at the upsurge of another “this.” In this sense the “this” is revealed as “this” by “a withdrawal into the ground of the world” on the part of all the other “thises;” its determination, which is the origin of all determinations, is a negation.

We must understand that this negation—seen from the point of view of the “this”—is wholly ideal. It adds nothing to being and subtracts nothing from it. The being confronted as “this” is what it is and does not cease being it; it does not become. As such it can not be outside of itself in the whole as a structure of the whole, nor can it be outside of itself in the whole so as to deny its identity with the whole. Negation can come to the *this* only through a being which has to be simultaneously presence to the whole of being and to the *this*—that is, through an ekstastic being. Since it leaves the *this* intact as being in itself, since it does not effect a real synthesis of all the thises in totality, the negation constitutive of the *this* is a negation of the external type; the relation of the “this” to the whole is a relation of externality. Thus we see that determination appears as an external negation correlative with the radical and ekstastic internal negation which *I am*. This is the explanation of the ambiguous character of the world, which is revealed simultaneously as a synthetic totality and as a purely additive collection of all the “thises.” In so far as the world is a totality which is revealed as that on which the For-itself has to be radically its own nothingness, the world is presented as a syncretism of undifferentiation. But in so far as this radical nihilation is always beyond a concrete and present nihilation, the world appears always ready to open like a box to allow the appearance of one or several “thises” which *already were* (there in the heart of the undifferentiation of the ground) what they are now as a differentiated figure. When we are gradually approaching a landscape which was given in great masses, we see objects appear which are given as having been there already, as elements in a discontinuous collection of “thises”; in the same way, in the experiments of the Gestalt school, the continuous background suddenly when apprehended as figure bursts into a multiplicity of discontinuous elements. Thus the world, as the correlate of a detotalized totality, appears as an evanescent totality in the sense that it is never a real synthesis but an ideal limitation—by nothing—of a collection of *thises*.

Thus the continuous as a formal quality of the ground allows the discontinuous to appear as a type of external relation between the *this* and the totality. It is precisely this perpetual evanescence of the totality into

collection, of the continuous into the discontinuous that defines space. Space can not be a *being*. It is a moving relation between beings which are unrelated. It is the total independence of the in-itselfs, as it is revealed to a being which is presence to "all" the in-itself as the independence of each one in relation to the others. It is the unique way in which beings can be revealed as having no relation, can be thus revealed to the being through which relation comes into the world; that is, space is pure exteriority. Since this exteriority cannot belong to any one of the *thises* considered and since in addition a purely local negativity is self-destructive, it can neither be by itself nor "be made-to-be." The spatializing being is the For-itself as co-present to the whole and to the "this." Space is not the world, but it is the instability of the world apprehended as totality, inasmuch as the world can always disintegrate into external multiplicity. Space is neither the ground nor the figure but the ideality of the ground inasmuch as it can always disintegrate into figures; it is neither the continuous nor the discontinuous, but the permanent passage from continuous to discontinuous. The existence of space is the proof that the For-itself by causing being "to be there" adds *nothing* to being. Space is the ideality of the synthesis. In this sense it is at once totality to the extent that it derives its origin from the world, and at the same time *nothing* inasmuch as it results in the pullulation of the *thises*. Space does not allow itself to be apprehended by concrete intuition for it is not, but it is continuously spatialized. It depends on temporality and appears in temporality since it can come into the world only through a being whose mode of being is temporalization; for space is the way in which this being loses itself ekstatically in order to realize being. The spatial characteristic of the *this* is not added synthetically to the *this* but is only the "place" of the *this*; that is, its relation of exteriority to the ground inasmuch as this relation can collapse into a multiplicity of external relations with other *thises* when the ground itself disintegrates into a multiplicity of figures. In this sense it would be useless to conceive of space as a form imposed on phenomena by the *a priori* structure of our sensibility. Space can not be a form, for it is *nothing*; it is, on the contrary, the indication that nothing except the negation—and this still as a type of external relation which leaves intact what it unites—can come to the in-itself through the For-itself. As for the For-itself, if it is not space, this is because it apprehends itself precisely as not being being-in-itself in so far as the in-itself is revealed to it in the mode of exteriority which we call extension. It is precisely by denying exteriority in itself and apprehending itself as ekstatic that the For-itself spatializes space. The relation between the For-itself and the in-itself is not one of juxtaposition or indifferent exteriority. Its relation with the in-itself, which is the foundation of all relations, is the internal negation, and it is through this that being-in-itself continues in indifferent exteriority in relation to other beings existing in a world. When the ex-

teriority of indifference is hypostasized as a substance existing in and through itself—which can be effected only at a lower stage of knowledge—it is made the object of a type of particular study under the title of geometry and becomes a pure specification of the abstract theory of multiplicities.

It remains to determine what type of being the external negation possesses since this comes to the world by the For-itself. We know that it does not belong to the *this*. This newspaper does not deny concerning itself that it is the table on which it is lying; for in that case the newspaper would be ekstastically outside itself and in the table which it denies, and its relation to the table would be an internal negation; it would thereby cease even to be in-itself and would become for-itself. The determinative relation of the *this* therefore can belong neither to the *this* nor to the *that*; it enfolds them without touching them, without conferring on them the slightest trace of new character; it leaves them for what they are. In this sense we can modify the famous statement of Spinoza, "*Omnis determinatio est negatio*," which Hegel declared to possess infinite riches; and we will claim rather that every determination which does not belong to the being which has to be its own determinations is an ideal negation. Moreover it would be inconceivable that it should be otherwise. Even if following an empirical-critical psychologism, we were to consider things as purely subjective contents, we still could not conceive that the subject would realize internal synthetic negations among these contents without being them in a radical ekstastic immanence which would remove all hope of any passage to objectivity.

With even more reason we can not imagine that the For-itself effects distorting synthetic negations among transcendents which it is not. In this sense the external negation constitutive of the "this" can not appear as an *objective* characteristic of the thing, if we understand by objective that which by nature belongs to the in-itself—or that which in one way or another *really* constitutes the object as it is. But we must not conclude from this that the external negation has subjective existence like the pure mode of being of the For-itself. The type of existence of the For-itself is a pure internal negation; the existence in it of an external negation would be destructive of its very existence. Consequently the external negation can not be a way of disposing and of classifying phenomena which would exist only as subjective phantoms, nor can it "subjectivize" being in so far as its revelation is constitutive of the For-itself. Its very exteriority therefore requires that it remain "in the air," exterior to the For-itself as well as to the In-itself. On the other hand, precisely because it is exteriority, it can not be by itself; it refuses all supports, it is by nature *unselbständig*, and yet it can not be referred to any substance. It is a *nothing*. In fact it is because the inkwell is not the table—nor the pipe nor the glass—that we can apprehend it as an inkwell. And yet if I say, "The inkwell is not the

table," I am thinking *nothing*. Thus determination is a *nothing* which does not belong as an internal structure either to the thing or to consciousness, but its being is *to-be-summoned* by the For-itself across a system of internal negations in which the in-itself is revealed in its indifference to all that is not itself. In so far as the For-itself makes itself known to itself by the In-itself, which it is not—in the mode of internal negation, the indifference of the In-itself as the indifference which the For-itself has to not-be is revealed in the world as determination.

III. QUALITY AND QUANTITY, POTENTIALITY, INSTRUMENTALITY

QUALITY is nothing other than the being of the *this* when it is considered apart from all external relation with the world or with other *thises*. Too often quality has been conceived as a simple subjective determination, and its quality-of-being has then been confused with the subjectivity of the psychic. The problem has then appeared to be especially to explain the constitution of an object-pole conceived as the transcendent unity of qualities. We have shown that this problem is insoluble. A quality does not objectivate itself if it is subjective. Supposing that we had projected the unity of an object-pole beyond qualities, at most each one of them would be given directly as the subjective effect of the action of things upon us. But the yellow of the lemon is not a subjective mode of apprehending the lemon; it is the lemon. And it is not true either that the object X appears as the empty form which holds together disparate qualities. In fact the lemon is extended throughout its qualities, and each of its qualities is extended throughout each of the others. It is the sourness of the lemon which is yellow, it is the yellow of the lemon which is sour. We eat the color of a cake, and the taste of this cake is the instrument which reveals its shape and its color to what we may call the alimentary intuition. Conversely if I poke my finger into a jar of jam, the sticky coldness of that jam is the revelation to my fingers of its sugary taste. The fluidity, the tepidity, the bluish color, the undulating restlessness of the water in a pool are given at one stroke, each quality through the others; and it is this total interpenetration which we call the *this*. This fact has been clearly shown by the experiences of painters, especially of Cézanne. Husserl is wrong in believing that a synthetic necessity unconditionally unites color and form; it is the form which is color and light. If the painter wants to vary any one of these factors, the others change as well, not because they are linked by some sort of law but because at bottom they are one and the same being.

In this sense every quality of being is all of being; the quality is the presence of the absolute contingency of being, its indifferent irreducibility. The apprehension of a quality does not add anything to being ex-

cept the fact that *being is there as this*. In this sense a quality is not an external aspect of being, for being, since it has no "within," can not have a "without." But in order for there to be quality there must be being for a nothingness which by nature is not being. Yet being is not *in itself* a quality although it is nothing either more or less. But quality is the *whole of being* revealing itself within the limits of the "there is." It is not the "outside" of being; it is all being since there cannot be being for being but only for that which makes itself not to be being. The relation of the For-itself to quality is an ontological relation. The intuition of a quality is not the passive contemplation of a given, and the mind is not an In-itself which remains what it is in that contemplation; that is, which remains in the mode of indifference in relation to the *this* contemplated. But the For-itself makes known to itself what it is by means of quality. For the For-itself, to perceive red as the color of this notebook is to reflect on itself as the internal negation of that quality. That is, the apprehension of quality is not a "fulfillment" (*Erfüllung*) as Husserl makes it, but the giving form to an emptiness as a determined emptiness of that quality. In this sense quality is a presence perpetually out of reach.

The description of knowledge is too often alimentary. There still remains too much of *prélogisme*² in epistemological philosophy, and we are not yet rid of that primitive illusion (which we must account for later) according to which to know is to eat—that is, to ingest the known object, to fill oneself with it (*Erfüllung*), and to digest it ("assimilation"). We shall best account for the original phenomenon of perception by insisting on the fact that the relation of the quality to us is that of absolute proximity (it "*is there*," it haunts us) without either giving or refusing itself, but we must add that this proximity implies a distance. It is what is immediately out of reach, what by definition refers us to ourselves as to an emptiness. Contemplation of it can only increase our thirst for being as the sight of the food out of reach added to Tantalus' hunger. Quality is the indication of what we are not and of the mode of being which is denied to us. The perception of white is the consciousness of the impossibility on principle for the For-itself to exist as color—that is, by being what it is. In this sense not only is being not distinguished from its qualities but even the whole apprehension of quality is the apprehension of a *this*. Quality, whatever it may be, is revealed to us as a being. The odor which I suddenly breathe in with my eyes closed, even before I have referred it to an odorous object, is already an odor-being and not a subjective impression. The light which strikes my eyes in the morning

² *Prélogisme* is a term borrowed from a now discredited theory to the effect that at an earlier stage of human development, thought was not logical, in particular did not feel the necessity of avoiding contradiction. See s.v. "prélogique." André Lalande, *Vocabulaire technique et critique de la philosophie*. Paris. Presses universitaires de France. 1951. pp. 814-815. Tr.

through my closed eyelids is already a light-being. This will appear obvious if one reflects on the fact that quality *is*. As a being which is what it is, it can indeed appear to a subjectivity, but it can not be inserted in the woof of that subjectivity which is what it is not and which is not what it is. To say that a quality is a quality-being is not to endow it with a mysterious support analogous to substance; it is simply to observe that its mode of being is radically different from the mode of the being "for-itself." The being of whiteness or of sourness indeed could in no way be apprehended as ekstatic.

If someone should ask now how it happens that the "this" has qualities we should reply that actually the *this* is released as a totality on the ground of the world and that it is given as an undifferentiated unity. It is the for-itself which can deny itself from various points of view when confronting the *this* and which reveals the quality as a new *this* on the ground of the thing. For each negating act by which the freedom of the For-itself spontaneously constitutes its being, there is a corresponding total revelation of being "in profile." This profile is nothing but a relation of the thing to the For-itself, a relation realized by the For-itself. It is the absolute determination of negativity, for it is not enough that the for-itself by an original negation should not be being nor that it should not be *this* being; in order for its determination as the nothingness of being to be full, the for-itself must realize itself as a certain unique manner of not being *this* being.

This absolute determination, which is the determination of quality as a profile of the "this," belongs to the freedom of the For-itself. It is not; it is as "to-be." Anyone may see this for himself by considering how the revelation of one quality of the thing appears always as a factual gratuity grasped across a freedom. While I can not make this orange peel cease being green, it is I who am responsible for my apprehending it as a rough green or a green roughness. But the relation figure-ground here is rather different from that of the *this* to the world. For instead of the figure's appearing on an undifferentiated ground, it is wholly penetrated by the ground; it holds the ground within it as its own undifferentiated density. I apprehend the peel as green; its "brightness-roughness" is revealed as an inner undifferentiated ground and plenitude of being for the green. There is no abstraction here in the sense that abstraction separates what is united, for being always appears entire in its profile. But the realization of being conditions the abstraction, for the abstraction is not the apprehension of a quality "in midair" but of a this-quality where the undifferentiation of the inner ground tends toward absolute equilibrium. The green abstracted does not lose its density of being—otherwise it would be nothing more than a subjective mode of the for-itself—but the brightness, the shape, the roughness, etc., which are given across it dissolve in the nihilating equilibrium of pure and simple massiveness. Abstraction, however,

is a phenomenon of presence to being since abstract being preserves its transcendence. But it can be realized only as a presence to being beyond being; it is a surpassing. This presence to being can be realized only on the level of possibility and in so far as the For-itself has to be its own possibilities. The abstract is revealed as the meaning which quality has to be as co-present to the presence of a for-itself to-come. Thus the abstract green is the meaning-to-come of the concrete *this* in so far as it reveals itself to me through its profile "green-brightness-roughness." The green is the peculiar possibility of this profile in so far as it is revealed across the possibilities which I am; that is, in so far as it is made-to-be. But this brings us to instrumentality and the temporality of the world. We shall return to this point. For the moment it is sufficient to say that the abstract haunts the concrete as a possibility fixed in the in-itself, which the concrete has to be. Whatever our perception may be, as the original contact with being, the abstract is always there but to-come; I apprehend it in the future with my future. It is correlative with the peculiar possibility of my present concrete negation as the possibility of *being* no more than this negation. The abstract is the meaning of *this* in so far as it reveals itself in the future across my possibility of fixing in in-itself the negation which I have to be.

If someone should remind us here of the classic difficulties regarding abstraction, we should reply that they stem from the fact that the constitution of the "this" and the act of abstraction are taken as distinct. It is certain that if the *this* does not include its own abstractions, there is no possibility of deriving them from it afterward. But it is in the very constitution of the *this* as *this* that the abstraction operates as the revelation in profile of *my* future. The For-itself is an "abtractor," not because it could realize a psychological operation of abstraction but because it rises as a presence to being with a future—that is, a beyond being. In itself being is neither concrete nor abstract nor present nor future: it is what it is. Yet the abstraction does not enrich being; it is only the revelation of a nothingness of being beyond being. But we challenge anyone to formulate the classic objections to abstraction without deriving them implicitly from the consideration of being as a *this*.

The original relation of the *thises* to one another can be neither interaction nor causality nor even the upsurge on the same ground of the world. If we suppose that the For-itself is present to one *this*, the other *thises* exist at the same time "in the world" but by virtue of being undifferentiated; they constitute the ground on which the *this* confronted is raised in relief. In order to establish any relation whatsoever between one *this* and another *this*, it is necessary that the second *this* be revealed rising up on the ground of the world on the occasion of an express negation which the For-itself has to be. But at the same time each *this* must be held at a distance from the other as not being the other by a negation of

a purely external type. Thus the original relation of *this* to *that* is an external negation. That appears as not being *this*. And the external negation is revealed to the For-itself as a transcendent; it is outside, it is *in-itself*. How are we to understand it?

The appearance of the *this-that* can be produced first only as totality. The primary relation here is the unity of a totality capable of disintegration; the For-itself is determined *en bloc* to not-be "this-that" on the ground of the world. The "this-that" is my whole room in so far as I am present to it. This concrete negation will not then disappear with the disintegration of the concrete mass into *this and that*. On the contrary it is the very condition of the disintegration. But on this ground of presence and by means of this ground of presence, being effects the appearance of its indifferent exteriority. This exteriority is revealed to me in the fact that the negation which I am is a unity-multiplicity rather than an undifferentiated totality. My negative upsurge into being is parceled out into independent negations which have no connection other than that they are negations which I have to be; that is, they derive their inner unity from me and not from being. I am present to that table, to those chairs, and as such I constitute myself synthetically as a polyvalent negation; but this purely inner negation, in so far as it is a negation of being is paralyzed with zones of nothingness; it is nihilated by virtue of negation, it is negation detotalized. Across these striations of nothingness which I have to be as my own nothingness of negation, appears the indifference of being. But this indifference I have to realize by this nothingness of negation which I have to be, not in so far as I am originally present to the "this" but in so far as I am also present to the "that." It is in and by my presence to the table that I realize the indifference of the chair (which presently I also have to not-be) as an absence of a springboard, an arrest of my impulse toward non-being, a breakdown in the circuit. "That" appears alongside "this," in the heart of a total revelation, as that from which I can in no way profit so as to determine myself to not-be "this."

Thus cleavage comes from being, but *there* is cleavage and separation only through the presence of the For-itself to all of being. The negation of the unity of the negations in so far as it is a revelation of the indifference of being and in so far as it apprehends the indifference of the "this" with regard to the "that" and the "that" with regard to the "this," is a revelation of the original relation of the *thises* in an external negation. The "this" is not "that." This external negation within the unity of a totality capable of disintegration is expressed by the word "and." "This is not that" is written "this and that." The external negation has the double character of being-in-itself and of being pure ideality. It is in-itself in that it does not in any way belong to the For-itself; the For-itself discovers the indifference of being as exteriority across the absolute interiority of its own negation (since in aesthetic intuition I apprehend an imaginary

object). Moreover we are not dealing with a negation which being has to be; this negation does not belong to any of the *thises* considered; it purely and simply is. It is what it is. But at the same time it is by no means a characteristic of the *this*, by no means one of its qualities. It is even totally independent of the *thises*, precisely because it does not belong to any one of them. For the indifference of being is *nothing*; we can not think it or even perceive it. It means simply that annihilation or the variations of the *that* can engage the *this* in nothing; in this sense it is only a *nothingness* in-itself separating the *thises*, and this nothingness is the only mode in which consciousness can realize the cohesion of identity which characterizes being.

This ideal nothingness in-itself is *quantity*. Quantity in fact is pure exteriority; it does not depend on the terms added but is only the affirmation of their independence. To count is to make an ideal distinction inside a totality capable of disintegration and already given. The number obtained by the addition does not belong to any of the *thises* counted nor to the totality capable of disintegration—in so far as this is revealed as totality. If there are three men talking opposite me, it is not as I apprehend them first as a “group in conversation” that I count them; and the fact of counting them as *three* leaves the concrete unity of their group perfectly intact. Being a “group of three” is not a concrete property of the group. Neither is it a property of its members. We can not say of any one of them that he is three nor even that he is a third—for the quality of third is only a reflection of the freedom of the for-itself which is counting; each one of the men can be a third, but no one of them is it. The relation of quantity is therefore a relation in-itself but a purely negative and external relation. It is precisely because it does not belong either to things or to totalities that it is isolated and detached from the surface of the world as a reflection (*reflet*) of nothingness cast on being. As a purely exterior relation between the *thises*, quantity is itself exterior to them and finally exterior to itself. It is the inapprehensible indifference of being—which can appear only *if there is being* and which, although belonging to being, can come to it only from a for-itself, inasmuch as this indifference can be revealed only by the exteriorization to infinity of a relation of exteriority which must be exterior to being and to itself. Thus space and quantity are only one and the same type of negation. By the sole fact that *this* and *that* are revealed as having no relation to me who am my own relation, space and quantity come into the world; for each one of them is the relation of things which are unrelated or, if you prefer, the nothingness of relation apprehended as a relation by the being which is its own relation. From this we can see that what Husserl calls *categories* (unity-multiplicity-relation of the whole to the part—more and less—around—beside—following—first, second, etc.—one, two, three, etc.—within and without—etc.)—these are only the ideal mixing of things

which leaves them wholly intact, without either enriching or impoverishing them by one *iota*; they merely indicate the infinite diversity of ways in which the freedom of the for-itself can realize the indifference of being.

We have treated the problem of the original relation of the for-itself to being as if the for-itself were a simple, instantaneous consciousness such as can be revealed to the Cartesian *cogito*. In truth we have already encountered the escape from self on the part of the for-itself inasmuch as this is the necessary condition for the appearance of the *thises* and of abstractions. But the ekstastic character of the for-itself was still only implicit. While we have had to proceed in this way for the sake of clarity in exposition, we should not thereby conclude that being is revealed to a being which would be first presence in order afterwards to constitute itself a future. But being-in-itself is revealed to a being which arises as about-to-come to itself. This means that the negation which the for-itself makes itself be in the presence of being has an ekstastic dimension of the future; it is in so far as I am not what I am (an ekstastic relation to my own possibilities) that I have to not-be being-in-itself as the revealing realization of the *this*. That means that I am presence to the "this" in the incompleteness of a totality detotalized. What consequence is there here for the revelation of the *this*?

Since I am always beyond what I am, about-to-come to myself, the "this" to which I am present appears to me as something which I surpass toward myself. The perceived is originally the surpassed; it is like a conductor in the circuit of selfness, and it appears within the limits of this circuit. To the extent that I make myself be the negation of the *this*, I flee this negation in the direction of a complementary negation; and the fusion of the two would effect the appearance of the in-itself which I am. There is a bond of being between the negation of the *this* and the second possible negation; the second is not just any negation but is precisely the complementary negation of my presence to the thing. But since the for-itself constitutes itself qua presence, as a non-positional self-consciousness, it makes known to itself, outside itself, through being, what it is not. It recovers its being outside in the mode "the-reflection-reflecting." The complementary negation which the for-itself is as its own possibility is then a negation-presence; that is, the for-itself has to be it as a non-thetic self-consciousness and as a thetic consciousness of being-beyond-being.

Being-beyond-being is bound to the present *this*, not by any kind of external relation but by a precise bond of complementarity which stands in exact correlation with the relation of the for-itself to its future. First of all, the *this* is revealed in the negation of a being which makes itself to not-be this, not by virtue of simple presence, but as a negation which is about-to-come to itself, which is its own possibility beyond its present. This possibility which haunts pure presence as its meaning out of reach

and as that which it lacks in order to be *in-itself* exists first as a projection of the present negation by virtue of engagement. Every negation in fact which would not have beyond itself in the future the meaning of an engagement as a possibility which comes to it and toward which it flees itself, would lose all its significance as negation. What the for-itself denies, it denies "with the dimension of a future." It involves either an external negation (this is not that, that chair is not a table) or an internal negation bearing on itself. To say that "this is not that" is to posit the exteriority of the "this" in relation to the "that," whether for now and for the future or in the strict "now"; but in the latter case the negation has a provisory character which constitutes the future as pure exteriority in relation to the present determination "this and that." In both cases the meaning comes to the negation in terms of the future; all negation is ekstatic. In so far as the for-itself denies itself in the future, the *this* concerning which it makes itself a negation is revealed as coming to itself from the future. The possibility that consciousness exists non-thetically as consciousness (of) being able not to not-be this is revealed as the *potentiality* of the *this* of being what it is. The first potentiality of the object, as the correlate of the engagement, an ontological structure of the negation, is *permanence*, which perpetually comes to it on the ground of the future. The revelation of the table as table requires a permanence of table which comes to it from the future and which is not a purely established given, but a potentiality. This permanence moreover does not come to the table from a future located in temporal infinity. Infinite time does not yet exist. The table is not revealed as having the possibility of being a table indefinitely. The time concerned here is neither finite nor infinite; potentiality merely causes the dimension of the future to appear.

When we speak of the meaning-to-come of the negation, we refer to that which the negation of the for-itself lacks in order to become a negation in itself. In this sense the negation is, in the future, the precision³ of the present negation. It is in the future that there is revealed the exact meaning of what I have to not-be as a correlate of the exact negation which I have to be. The polymorphic negation of the *this*, where the green is formed by a totality "roughness-light," gets its meaning only if it has to be the negation of the green; that is, of a being-green, the ground of which tends toward the equilibrium of undifferentiation. In a word, the absent-meaning of my polymorphic negation is a negation confined by a green more purely green on an undifferentiated ground. Thus the pure green comes to the "green-roughness-light" on the ground of the future as its meaning. We apprehend here the meaning of what we have called *abstraction*. The existent does not possess its essence as a present quality. It is even the negation of essence; the green *never* is green. But the essence comes from the ground of the future to the existent, as a

³ Used in the technical sense of "determination" or "giving an exact meaning." Tr.

meaning which is never given and which forever haunts it. It is the pure correlate of the pure ideality of my negation. In this sense there is no such thing as an operation of abstraction if we mean by that a psychological affirmative act of selection effected by a constituted mind. Far from abstracting certain qualities in terms of things, we must on the contrary view abstraction as the original mode of being of the for-itself, necessary in order that there may be, in general, things and a world. The abstract is a structure of the world and is necessary for the upsurge of the concrete; the concrete is concrete only in so far as it leans in the direction of its abstraction, that it makes itself known by the abstraction which it is. The being of the for-itself is revealing-abstracting. We see that from this point of view permanence and the abstract are only one. If the table has qua table a potentiality of permanence, this is to the exact degree that it has to be a table. Permanence is pure possibility for a *this* to be consistent with its essence.

We have seen in Part Two of this work that the relation between the possible which I am and the present which I am fleeing is the same as the relation between the lacking and the one which lacks what is lacking. The ideal fusion of the lacking with the one which lacks what is lacking is an unrealizable totality which haunts the for-itself and constitutes its very being as a nothingness of being. This ideal we called the in-itself-for-itself or *value*. But on the unreflective level this value is not grasped thetically by the for-itself; it is only a condition of being. If our conclusions are accurate, this perpetual indication of an unrealizable fusion must appear not as a structure of the unreflective consciousness but as a transcendent indication of an ideal structure of the object. This structure can be easily revealed; correlative with the indication of a fusion of the polymorphic negation with the abstract negation which is its meaning, there is to be revealed a transcendent and ideal indication—that of a fusion of the existing *this* with its essence-to-come. Thus fusion must be such that the abstract is the foundation of the concrete and that simultaneously the concrete is the foundation of the abstract. In other words, the concrete “flesh and blood” existence must be the essence, and the essence must itself be produced as a total concretion; that is, it must have the full richness of the concrete without however allowing us to discover in it any thing other than itself in its total purity. Or if you prefer, the form must be to itself—and totally—its own matter. And conversely the matter must be produced as absolute form.

This perpetually indicated but impossible fusion of essence and existence does not belong either to the present or the future, it indicates rather the fusion of past, present, and future, and it presents itself as a synthesis to be effected of temporal totality. It is value as transcendence; it is what we call *beauty*. Beauty therefore represents an ideal state of the world, correlative with an ideal realization of the for-itself; in this realiza-

tion the essence and the existence of things are revealed as identity to a being who, in this very revelation, would be merged with himself in the absolute unity of the in-itself. This is precisely because the beautiful is not only a transcendent synthesis to be effected but because it can be realized only in and through a totalization of ourselves. This is precisely why we desire the beautiful and why we apprehend the universe as lacking the beautiful to the extent that we ourselves apprehend ourselves as a lack. But the beautiful is no more a potentiality of things than the in-itself-for-itself is a peculiar possibility of the for-itself. It haunts the world as an unrealizable. To the extent that man realizes the beautiful in the world, he realizes it in the imaginary mode. This means that in the aesthetic intuition, I apprehend an imaginary object across an imaginary realization of myself as a totality in-itself and for-itself. Ordinarily the beautiful, like value, is not thematically made explicit as a value-out-of-reach-of-the-world. It is implicitly apprehended on things as an absence; it is revealed implicitly across the *imperfection* of the world.

These original potentialities are not the only ones which characterize the *this*. To the extent that the for-itself has to be its being beyond its present, it is the revelation of a qualified beyond-being, which comes to the "this" on the ground of being. In so far as the for-itself is beyond the crescent moon, next to a being-beyond-being which is the future full moon the full moon becomes the potentiality of the crescent moon. In so far as the for-itself is beyond the bud, next to the flower, the flower is a potentiality of the bud. The revelation of these new potentialities implies an original relation to the past. It is in the past that the connection between the crescent moon and the full moon, between the bud and the flower is gradually discovered. The past of the for-itself stands as empirical knowledge for the for-itself. But this knowledge does not remain as an inert given. It is behind the for-itself, of course, unrecognizable as such and out of reach. But in the ekstastic unity of its being, it is in terms of this past that the for-itself makes known to itself what it is in the future. My wisdom (*savoir*) as regards the moon escapes me as a thematic knowledge (*connaissance*). But I am it, and my way of being is—at least in certain cases—to cause what I no longer am to come to me in the form of what I am not yet. This negation of the *this*—which I have been—I am in two ways: in the mode of not being any longer and of not being yet. I am beyond the crescent moon as the possibility of a radical negation of the moon as a full disk; and correlative with the return of my future negation toward my presence, the full moon comes back toward the crescent in order to determine it in *this* as a negation; the full moon is what the crescent lacks; it is the lack of the full moon which makes the crescent a crescent. Thus within the unity of the same ontological negation, I attribute the dimension of the future to the crescent as crescent—in the form of permanence and essence—and I constitute it as the crescent moon

by the determining return toward it of what it lacks. Thus is constituted the scale of possibilities which reaches from permanence to potencies. Human-reality by surpassing itself in the direction of its own possibility of negation, makes itself that by which negation through surpassing comes into the world. It is through human reality that lack comes to things in the form of "potency," of "incompletion," of "suspension," of "potentiality."

Nevertheless the transcendent being of lack can not have the nature of ekstastic lack in immanence. Let us look at it more carefully. The in-itself does not have to be its own potentiality in the mode of not-yet. The revelation of the in-itself is originally a revelation of the self-identity of indifference. The in-itself is what it is without any ekstastic dispersion of its being. It does not have to be its permanence or its essence or that which it lacks as I have to be my future. My upsurge into the world causes potentialities to arise correlatively. But these potentialities are fixed in their very arising; they are eaten away by exteriority. We shall discover here again that double aspect of the transcendent which in its very ambiguity has given birth to space: a totality which is dispersed in relations of exteriority. Potentiality on the ground of the future turns back on the *this* to determine it, but the relation between the *this* as in-itself and its potentiality is an external relation. The crescent moon is determined as lacking or deprived of—in relation to the full moon. But at the same time the crescent is revealed as being fully what it is—that concrete sign in the sky, which needs nothing in order to be what it is. The same is true for this bud or for this match, which is what it is, for which its meaning as being-a-match remains exterior, which can of course burst into flame but which at present is this piece of white wood with a black tip. The potentialities of the *this*, while strictly connected with it, are present as in-itselfs and are in a state of indifference in relation to it. This inkwell can be broken, thrown against the marble of the fireplace where it will be shattered. But this potentiality is entirely cut off from it, for it is only the transcendent correlate of my possibility of throwing the inkwell against the marble of the fireplace. In itself the inkwell is neither breakable nor unbreakable; it is.

That does not mean that I can consider a *this* as outside all potentiality; from the mere fact that I am my own future, the *this* is revealed as provided with potentialities. To apprehend the match as a piece of white wood with a black tip is not to strip it of all potentiality but simply to confer on it new ones (a new permanence—a new essence). In order for the *this* to be entirely deprived of potentialities, it would be necessary that I be a pure presence, which is inconceivable. But the *this* has various potentialities which are equivalents—that is, in a state of equivalence in relation to it. This is because it does not have to be *them*. In addition my possibilities do not exist but are possibilized because they are

eaten away from within by my freedom; that is, whatever my possible may be, its opposite is equally possible. I can shatter this inkwell but I can just as well put it in a drawer. I can aim at the full moon beyond the crescent moon, but I can just as well insist on the permanence of the crescent as such. Consequently the inkwell is found to be provided with equivalent possibilities: to be put in a drawer, to be shattered. This crescent moon can be an open curve in the sky or a disk held in suspense. Those potentialities which refer back to the *this* without being made to be by it and without having to be—those we shall call probabilities to indicate that they exist in the mode of being of the in-itself. We cannot say that my possibles are; they are possibilized. But probabilities are not “probabilized,” they are each one *in itself* as probable. In this sense the inkwell is, but its *being-an-inkwell* is a probable; for the inkwell’s *having-to-be-an-inkwell* is a pure appearance which is founded immediately on a relation of exteriority.

These potentialities or probabilities, which are the meaning of being beyond being, are *in-itselfs beyond being*, and precisely for this reason they are *nothings*. The essence of the inkwell is *made-to-be* as a correlate of the possible negation of the for-itself, but it is not the inkwell and it is not being. In so far as this essence is in-itself, it is a negation hypostasized and reified; that is, it is a nothing, it belongs to the shell of nothingness which encases and determines the world. The for-itself reveals the inkwell as an inkwell. But this revelation is made beyond the being of the inkwell, in that future which is not; all the potentialities of being, from permanence to qualified potentialities, are defined as that which being is not yet without ever truly having to be them. Here again knowledge adds nothing to being and removes nothing from it; knowledge adorns it with no new quality. It causes being to-be-there by surpassing it toward a nothingness which enters into only negative exterior relations with it. This character of pure nothingness in potentiality results in efforts on the part of science, which aims at establishing relations of simple exteriority, radically to suppress the potential (essence and potencies). But on the other hand the necessity of potentiality as a meaningful structure of perception appears clearly enough so that we need not insist on it here. Scientific knowledge, in fact, can neither overcome nor suppress the potentializing structure of perception. On the contrary science must presuppose it.

We have attempted to show how the presence of the for-itself to being reveals being as a *thing*, and for the sake of clarity in exposition we have had to show successively the various structures of the thing: the *this* and spatiality, permanence, essence and potentialities. It is evident, however, that this successive account does not correspond to a real priority of certain of these moments over others: the upsurge of the for-itself causes the thing to be revealed with the totality of its structures. Further-

more there is not one of these structures which does not imply all the others. The *this* does not have even logical priority over essence. On the contrary the *this* presupposes essence, and conversely essence is the essence of this. Similarly the *this* as the being-of-a-quality can appear only on the ground of the world, but the world is a collection of *thises*; the disintegrating relation of the world to the *thises*, of the *thises* to the world is spatiality. There is therefore no substantial form here, no principle of unity to stand *behind* the modes of appearance of the phenomenon; everything is given at one stroke without any primacy. For the same reasons, it would be incorrect to conceive of any kind of primacy as concerns the representative. Our descriptions have led us to put in relief the *thing in the world*, and because of this fact we might be tempted to believe that the world and the thing are revealed to the for-itself in a sort of contemplative intuition. This, however, would be an intuition after the event such that objects would be arranged one in relation to another in a practical order of instrumentality. Such an error will be avoided if we are willing to maintain that the world appears inside the circuit of selfness. It is this which separates the for-itself from itself or—to employ an expression of Heidegger's—it is this in terms of which human reality makes known to itself what it is.

This project toward self on the part of the for-itself, which constitutes selfness, is in no way a contemplative repose. It is a lack, as we have said, but not a *given* lack. It is a lack which has to be to itself its own lack. It must be understood that an *established* lack or a lack in-itself vanishes into exteriority, as we have pointed out in preceding passages. But a being which constitutes itself as lack can determine itself only there upon that which it lacks and which it is—in short, by a perpetual wrenching away from self toward the self which it has to be. This means that lack can be to itself its own lack only as a *refused* lack: the only truly inner connection between that which lacks — and that which is lacking is the refusal. In fact to the extent that the being which lacks — is not what it lacks, we apprehend in it a negation. But if this negation is not to slip away into pure exteriority—and along with it all possibility of negation in general—its foundation must be in the necessity for the being which lacks — to be that which it lacks. Thus the foundation of the negation is negation of negation. But this negation-foundation is no more a *given* than the lack of which it is an essential moment; it is as having to be. The for-itself in the phantom unity “the-reflection-reflecting” makes itself be its own lack; that is, it projects itself toward its lack by refusing it. It is only as a lack to be suppressed that lack can be internal for the for-itself, and the for-itself can realize its own lack only by having to be it; that is, by being a project towards its suppression. Thus the relation of the for-itself to its future is never static nor given; the future comes to the present of the for-itself in order to determine it in its heart inasmuch as the for-itself is

already there at the future as its suppression. The for-itself can be a lack here only if it is there a suppression of the lack, but a suppression which it has to be in the mode of non-being. It is this original relation which subsequently allows the empirical establishment of particular lacks as lacks suffered or endured. It is in general the foundation of affectivity; it is this also which some will try to explain psychologically by installing within the psyche those idols and those phantoms which we call drives or appetites. These drives or these forces, which by violence are inserted into the psyche, are not understandable in themselves, for they are given by the psychologist as in-itself existents; that is, their very character as force is contradicted by their inner repose of indifference, and their unity is dispersed in a pure relation of exteriority. We can apprehend them only as the result of projecting into the in-itself a relation of immanent being of the for-itself to itself and this ontological relation is precisely lack.

But this lack can not be grasped thetically and known by the unreflective consciousness (nor does it appear to the impure, accessory reflection which apprehends it as a psychic object—i.e., as a drive or as a feeling). It is accessible only to the purifying reflection, with which we are not here concerned. On the level of consciousness of the world, this lack can appear only in projection, as a transcendent and ideal characteristic. In fact while that which the for-itself lacks is the ideal presence to a being-beyond-being, the being-beyond-being is originally apprehended as the lacking-to-being. Thus the world is revealed as haunted by absences to be realized, and each *this* appears with a cortege of absences which point to it and determine it. These absences are not basically different from potentialities. But it is easier to grasp their meaning. Thus the absences indicate the *this* as *this*, and conversely the *this* points toward the absences. Since each absence is being-beyond-being—i.e., an absent-in-itself—each *this* points toward another state of its being or toward other beings. But of course this organization of indicative complexes is fixed and petrified in in-itself; hence all these mute and petrified indications, which fall back into the indifference of isolation at the same time that they arise, resemble the fixed, stony smile in the empty eyes of a statue.

The absences which appear behind things do not appear as absences to be made present by things. Neither can we say that they are revealed as to be realized by me since the “me” is a transcendent structure of the psyche and appears only to the reflective consciousness. They are pure demands which rise as “voids to be filled” in the middle of the circuit of selfness. Their character as “voids to be filled by the for-itself” is manifested to the unreflective consciousness by a direct and personal urgency which is *lived* as such without being referred to somebody or thematized. It is in and through the very fact of living them as claims that there is revealed what in an earlier chapter we called their selfness. They are tasks, and this world is a world of tasks. In relation to the tasks, the *this* which

they indicate is both "the this of these tasks"—that is, the unique in-itself which is determined by them and which they indicate as being able to *fulfill* them—and that which does not have to be these tasks since it exists in the absolute unity of identity. This connection in isolation, this inert relation within the dynamic is what we call the relation of means to end. It is a being-for which is degraded, laminated by exteriority, a being-for whose transcendent ideality can be conceived only as a correlate of the being-for which the for-itself has to be.

The thing, in so far as it both rests in the quiet beatitude of indifference and yet points beyond it to tasks to be performed which make known to it what it has to be, is an instrument or utensil. The original relation between things, that which appears on the foundation of the quantitative relation of the *thises*, is the relation of *instrumentality*. This instrumentality is not subsequent to or subordinate to the structures already indicated: in one sense it presupposes them; in another it is presupposed by them. The thing is not first a thing in order to be subsequently an instrument; neither is it first an instrument in order to be revealed subsequently as a thing. It is an instrumental-thing. It is true, nevertheless, that the further research of the scientist will reveal it as purely a *thing*—i.e., stripped of all instrumentality. But this is because the scientist is concerned only with establishing purely exterior relations. Moreover the result of this scientific research is that the thing itself, deprived of all instrumentality, finally disappears into absolute exteriority. We can see to what extent we must correct Heidegger's definition: to be sure, the world appears in the circuit of selfness; but since the circuit is non-thetic, the making known of what I am can not be thetic either. To be in the world is not to escape from the world toward oneself but to escape from the world toward a beyond-the-world which is the future world. What the world makes known to me is only "worldly." It follows that if the infinite reference of instruments never refers to a for-itself which I *am*, then the totality of instruments is the exact correlate of my possibilities; and as I *am* my possibilities, the order of instruments in the world is the image of my possibilities projected in the in-itself; i.e., the image of what I *am*. But I can never decipher this worldly image; I adapt myself to it in and through action, but a reflective scissiparity would be required in order for me to be able to be an object to myself.

It is not then through unauthenticity that human reality loses itself in the world. For human reality, being-in-the-world means radically to lose oneself in the world through the very revelation which causes there to be a world—that is, to be referred without respite, without even the possibility of "a purpose for which" from instrument to instrument with no recourse save the reflective revolution. It would be useless to object that the chain of "for whats" is suspended from the "for whoms" (*Worum-willen*). Of course the *Worum-willen* refers us to a structure of being which

we have not yet elucidated; namely, the for-others. And the "for whom" constantly appears behind the instruments. But this "for whom," whose constitution is different from the "for what" does not break the chain. It is simply one of the links; when it is confronted in the perspective of instrumentality, it does not allow an escape from the in-itself. To be sure these workclothes are for the worker. But they are for the worker so that he can fix the roof without getting dirty. And why shouldn't he get dirty? In order not to spend most of his salary for clothes. This salary is allotted him as the minimum quantity of money which will enable him to support himself; and he "supports" himself so as to be able to apply his capacities for work at repairing roofs. And why should he repair the roof? So that it will not rain in the office where employees are working at book-keeping. Etc. This does not mean that we should always think of the Other as an instrument of a particular type, but merely that when we consider the Other in terms of the world, we do not escape even so from the infinite regress of instrumental complexes.

Thus to the extent that the for-itself is its own lack as a refusal correlative with its impulse toward self, being is revealed to the for-itself on the ground of the world as an instrumental-thing, and the world rises as the undifferentiated ground of indicative complexes of instrumentality. The ensemble of these references is void of meaning but in this sense—that the possibility of positing the problem of meaning on this level does not exist. We work to live and we live to work. The question of the meaning of the totality "life-work"—"Why do I work, I who am living? Why live if it is in order to work?"—this can be posited only on the reflective level since it implies a self-discovery on the part of the for-itself.

It remains to explain how as a correlate of the pure negation which I am, instrumentality can arise in the world. How does it happen that I am not a barren, indefinitely repeated negation of the *this* as pure *this*? If I am nothing but the pure nothingness which I have to be, how can this negation reveal a plurality of tasks which are my image? In order to answer this question we must recall that the for-itself is not purely and simply a future which comes to the present. It has to be also its past in the form of "was." The ekstatic contradiction in the three temporal dimensions is such that while the for-itself is a being which by means of its future makes known to itself the meaning of what it was, it is also in the same upsurge a being which has to be its *will-be* within the perspectives of a certain "was" which it is fleeing. In this sense we must always look for the meaning of a temporal dimension elsewhere, in another dimension. This is what we have called the *diaspora*, for the unity of diasporatic being is not a pure given appurtenance; it is the necessity of realizing the diaspora by making itself conditioned there outside within the unity of the self.

Therefore the negation which I am and which reveals the "this" has to

be in the mode of "was." This pure negation which as simple presence is not, has its being behind it, as past or facticity. As such we must recognize that it is never a negation without roots. On the contrary, it is a *qualified* negation—if by that we understand that it drags its qualification behind it as the being which it has to not-be in the form of "was." The negation arises as a non-thetic negation of the past in the mode of internal determination in so far as it makes itself a thetic negation of the *this*. The upsurge is effected in the unity of a double "being for," since the negation effects its existence in the mode of the-reflection-reflecting, as the negation of the *this*, in order to escape from the past which it is; it escapes from the past in order to disengage itself from the *this* by fleeing it in its being toward the future. This is what we shall call the point of view which the for-itself has on the world. This point of view, comparable to facticity, is the ekstatic qualification of the negation as the original relation to the in-itself. On the other hand, as we have seen, everything that is for-itself is so in the mode of "was" as an ekstatic appurtenance of the world. It is not in the future that I rediscover my presence since the future releases the world to me as correlative with a consciousness to-come. Rather my being appears to me in the past, although non-thematically, within the compass of being-in-itself; that is, in relief in the midst of the world. Of course this being is still consciousness of —, that is, a for-itself; but it is a for-itself fixed in in-itself, and consequently while a consciousness of the world, it is fallen into the midst of the world. The meaning of realism, of naturalism, and of materialism lies in the past; these three philosophies are descriptions of the past as if it were present.

The for-itself is then a double flight from the world; it escapes its own being-in-the-midst-of-the-world as a presence to a world which it is fleeing. The possible is the free end of the flight. The for-itself can not flee toward a transcendent which it is not, but only toward a transcendent which it is. It is this fact which removes all possibility of surcease from this perpetual flight. If I may use a down-to-earth image for the sake of making my thought clearer, picture an ass drawing behind him a cart. He attempts to get hold of a carrot which has been fastened at the end of a stick which in turn has been tied to the shaft of the cart. Every effort on the part of the ass to seize the carrot results in advancing the whole apparatus and the cart itself, which always remains at the same distance from the ass. Thus we run after a possible which our very running causes to appear, which is nothing but our running itself, and which thereby is by definition out of reach. We run toward ourselves and we are—due to this very fact—the being which can not be reunited with itself. In one sense the running is void of meaning since the goal is never given but invented and projected proportionately as we run toward it. In another sense we can not refuse to it that meaning which it rejects since in spite of

everything possibility is the meaning of the for-itself. Thus there is and there is not a meaning in the flight.

Now in that very flight from the past which I am toward the future which I am, the future is prefigured in relation to the past at the same time that it confers on the past all its meaning. The future is the past surpassed as a given in-itself toward an in-itself which would be its own foundation—that is, which would be in so far as I should have to be it. My possibility is the free recovery of my past in so far as this recovery can rescue it by providing its foundation. I flee the being without foundation which I was toward the founding act which I can be only in the mode of the *I would be*. Thus the possible is the lack which the for-itself makes itself be; that is, which is lacking to the present negation in so far as it is a *qualified* negation (a negation which has its quality outside itself in the past). As such the possible is itself qualified—not by virtue of being a given, which would be its own quality in the world of the in-itself, but as an indication of the recovery which would found the ekstastic qualification which the for-itself was.

Thus thirst, for example, is three dimensional: it is a present flight from a state of emptiness which the for-itself was. This very flight confers on the given state its character of emptiness or lack; in the past the lack could not be lack, for the given can be “lacking” only if it is surpassed towards — by a being which is its own transcendence. But this flight is a flight towards —, and it is this “towards” which gives flight its meaning. As such flight is itself a lack which makes itself—that is, a constitution in the past of a given as a lack or potentiality and at the same time the free recovery of the given by a for-itself which makes itself a lack in the form, the “reflection-reflecting”—that is, as consciousness of lack. Finally that toward which the lack is fled, in so far as it causes itself to be conditioned in its being-a-lack by that which it lacks, is the possibility that it is to be a thirst which would be no longer a lack but a thirst-repletion. The possible is the indication of the repletion; value, as a phantom-being which surrounds and penetrates the for-itself through and through, is the indication of a thirst which would be simultaneously a given—as it “was it”—and a recovery—as the game of “the reflection-reflecting” constitutes it ekstastically. As one can see, we are dealing here with a plenitude which determines itself as thirst. The ekstastic relation past-present provides the outline of this plenitude with the structure “thirst” as its meaning, and the possible which I am must furnish its very density, its fleshly plenitude, as reflection (*reflexion*).

Thus my presence to being which determines it as *this* is a negation of the “*this*” in so far as I am also a *qualified lack beside the “this.”* To the extent that my possible is a possible presence to being beyond being, the qualification of my possible reveals a being-beyond-being as the being whose co-presence is a co-presence strictly linked with a repletion to-come.

Thus absence in the world is revealed as a being to-be-realized in so far as this being is correlative with the possible-being which *I* lack. The glass of water appears as about-to-be-drunk; that is, as the correlate of a thirst grasped non-thetically and its very being as about to be satisfied. But these descriptions, which all imply a relation to the future of the world, will be clearer if we at present explain how the time of the world or universal time is revealed to consciousness on the ground of the original negation.

IV. THE TIME OF THE WORLD

UNIVERSAL time comes into the world through the For-itself. The in-itself is not adapted to temporality precisely because it is in-itself and because temporality is the mode of unitary being in a being which is perpetually at a distance from itself for itself. The For-itself, on the contrary, is temporality, but it is not consciousness of temporality except when it produces itself in the relation "reflective-reflected-on." In the unreflective mode the for-itself discovers temporality on being—that is, outside. Universal temporality is objective.

A. THE PAST

THE "this" does not appear as a present which later will have to become past and which before that was future. This inkwell the moment I perceive it already exists in the three temporal dimensions. In so far as I apprehend it as permanence—i.e., as essence—it is already in the future although I am not present to it in my actual presence but as about-to-come-to-myself. By the same token, I can not apprehend it except as having already been there in the world inasmuch as I was already there myself as presence. In this sense there exists no "synthesis of recognition" if we mean by that a progressive operation of identification which by successive organization of the "nows" would confer a duration on the thing perceived. The For-itself directs the explosion of its temporality against the whole length of the revealed in-itself as though against the length of an immense and monotonous wall of which it can not see the end. I am that original negation which I have to be in the mode of not-yet and of already, beside the being which is what it is. If then we suppose a consciousness arising in a motionless world beside a unique being which is unchangeably what it is, this being will be revealed with a past and a future of immutability which will necessitate no "operation" of a synthesis and which will be one with its very revelation. The operation would be necessary only if the For-itself had to retain and to constitute its own past by the same stroke. But due to the mere fact that the in-itself is its

own past as also its own future, the revelation of the in-itself can only be temporalized. The "this" is revealed temporally not because it would be refracted across an a priori form of inner meaning but because it is revealed to a revelation of which the very being is temporalization. Nevertheless the a-temporality of being is represented in its very revelation; in so far as it is grasped through and in a temporality which temporalizes itself, the *this* appears originally as temporal; but in so far as it is what it is, it refuses to be its own temporality and merely reflects time. In addition it reflects the internal ekstastic relation—which is at the source of temporality—as a purely objective relation of exteriority. Permanence, as a compromise between non-temporal identity and the ekstastic unity of temporalization, will appear therefore as the pure slipping by of in-itself instants, little nothingnesses separated one from another and reunited by a relation of simple exteriority on the surface of a being which preserves an a-temporal immutability. It is not true therefore that the non-temporality of being escapes us; on the contrary, it is given in time, it provides the foundation for the mode of being of universal time.

In so far then as the For-itself "was" what it is, the instrument or thing appears to it as having been already there. The For-itself can be presence to the *this* only as a presence which was; all perception is in-itself, and without any "operation" it is a recollection. Now what is revealed across the ekstastic unity of Past and Present is an identical being. It is not apprehended as being *the same* as the past and the present but as being it. Temporality is only a tool of vision. Yet this it which it is, the "this" already was. Thus the *this* appears as having a past. But it refuses to be this past; it only has it. Temporality in so far as it is grasped objectively is therefore a pure phantom, for it does not give itself as the temporality of the For-itself nor as the temporality which the in-itself has to be. At the same time the transcendent Past, since it is in-itself by virtue of transcendence, can not be as that which the Present has to be; the Past is isolated in a phantom of *Selbständigkeit*. And as each moment of the past is a "having-been Present," this isolation is pursued to the very interior of the Past. Consequently the unchangeable *this* is revealed across a flickering and an infinite parcelling out of phantom in-itselfs. This is how that glass or that table is revealed to me. They do not endure; they are. Time flows over them.

Of course someone will object that I merely fail to see changes in the glass or table. But this is to introduce very inappropriately a scientific point of view. Such a point of view, which nothing justifies, is contradicted by our very perception. The pipe, the pencil, all these beings which are released entire in each one of their "profiles" and whose permanence is wholly indifferent to the multiplicity of profiles, are transcendent to all temporality even though they are revealed in temporality. The "thing" exists straightway as a "form;" that is, a whole which is not

affected by any of the superficial parasitic variations which we can see on it. Each *this* is revealed with a law of being which determines its threshold, its level of change where it will cease to be what it is in order simply not to be. This law of being, which expresses "permanence," is an immediately revealed structure of the essence of the "this;" it determines a limit-of-potentiality in the "this"—that of disappearing from the world. We shall return to this point. Thus the For-itself apprehends temporality on being, as a pure reflection which plays on the surface of being without any possibility of modifying being. The scientist will fix this absolute, spectral, nihilating quality of time in a concept under the name of homogeneity. But the transcendent apprehension on the in-itself of the ekstastic unity of the temporalizing For-itself is effected as the apprehension of an empty form of temporal unity without any being which founds that unity *by being it*. Thus on the plane of Present-Past, there appears that curious unity of the absolute dispersion which is external temporality. Here each before and each after is an "in-itself" isolated from others by its indifferent exteriority, and here these instants are reunited in the unity of one and the same being. And this common being or Time is nothing other than the very dispersion, conceived as necessity and substantiality. This contradictory nature could appear only on the double foundation of the For-itself and the In-itself. From this standpoint in so far as scientific reflection aims at hypostasizing the relation of exteriority, being will be conceived—i.e., thought of in emptiness—not as a transcendence aimed at across time but as a content which passes from instant into instant. Better yet it will be conceived as a multiplicity of contents, external to one another, and strictly resembling one another.

So far our description of universal temporality has been attempted under the hypothesis that nothing may come from being save its non-temporal immutability. But *something* does come from being: what, for lack of a better term, we shall call abolitions and apparitions. These apparitions and abolitions ought to be the object of a purely metaphysical elucidation, not an ontological one, for we can conceive of their necessity neither from the standpoint of the structures of being of the For-itself nor of those of the In-itself. Their existence is that of a contingent and metaphysical fact. We do not know exactly what comes from being in the phenomenon of apparition since this phenomenon is already the fact of a temporalized "this." Yet experience teaches us that there are various upsurges and annihilations of the "this." Moreover since we know that perception reveals the In-itself and outside the In-itself *nothing*, we can consider the in-itself as the foundation of these upsurges and of these annihilations. In addition we see clearly that the principle of identity as the law of being of the in-itself requires that the abolition and the apparition be totally exterior to the in-itself which has appeared or been abolished, for otherwise the in-itself would at the same time both be and not

be. The abolition can not be that falling away from being which is an end. Only the For-itself can know its falling away because it is to its itself its own end. Being, a quasi-affirmation in which the affirming is coated over by the affirmed, exists without any inner finitude in the peculiar tension of its "self-affirmation." Its "until then" is totally external to it. Thus the abolition does not involve the necessity of an after, which can be manifested only in a world and for an in-itself, but a quasi-after. This quasi-after can be expressed thus: being-in-itself can not effect the mediation between itself and its nothingness. Similarly apparitions are not adventures of the appearing being. That priority over itself which "adventure" would suppose can be found only in the For-itself, for which both apparition and end are inner adventures. Being is what it is. It is without "putting itself into being," without childhood or youth. That which has appeared is not a novelty to itself; it is from the start being without any relation to a "before" which it would have to be as pure absence. Here again we find a quasi-succession; i.e., on the part of that which has appeared, there is a complete exteriority in relation to its nothingness.

But in order for this absolute exteriority to be given in the form of the "there is," there must be already a world; that is, the upsurge of a For-itself. The absolute exteriority of the In-itself in relation to the In-itself is responsible for the fact that even the very nothingness which is the quasi-before of the apparition or the quasi-after of the abolition can find no place in the plenitude of being. It is only within the unity of a world and on the ground of a world that there can appear a *this* which was not or that there can be revealed that relation-of-absence-of-relation which is exteriority. The nothingness of being, which is priority in relation to an "appeared" which "was not," can come only retrospectively to a world by a For-itself which is its own nothingness and its own priority. Thus the upsurge and the annihilation of the *this* are ambiguous phenomena; here again what comes to being by the For-itself is a pure nothingness, the not-being-yet and the not-being-any-longer. The being which we are considering is not the foundation of it, nor the world as a totality apprehended before or after. On the other hand, in so far as the upsurge is revealed in the world by a For-itself which is its own before and its own after, the apparition is given first as an adventure; we apprehend the *this*, which has appeared as being already there in the world, as its own absence inasmuch as we ourselves were already present to a world from which it was absent. Thus the thing can arise from its own nothingness. Here, however, we are not dealing with a conceptual view of the mind but with an original structure of perception. The experiments of the Gestalt School show clearly that pure apparition is always grasped as a dynamic upsurge; the appearance comes on the run to being, on the ground of nothingness.

At the same time we have here the origin of the "principle of causality." The ideal of causality is not the negation of the "appeared" as such, as

someone like Meyerson would make it, nor is it the assigning of a permanent bond of exteriority between two phenomena. The first causality is the apprehension of the "appeared" before it appears, as being already there in its own nothingness so as to prepare its apparition. Causality is simply the first apprehension of the temporality of the "appeared" as an ekstatic mode of being. But the adventurous character of the event, as the ekstatic constitution of the apparition, disintegrates in the very perception; the *before* and the *after* are fixed in its nothingness-in-itself, the "appeared" in its indifferent self-identity; the non-being of the "appeared" in that prior instant is revealed as an indifferent plenitude of the being existing at that instant; the relation of causality disintegrates into a pure relation of exteriority between the "thises" prior to the "appeared" and the "appeared" itself. Thus the ambiguity of apparition and of abolition comes from the fact that they are given, like the world, like space, like potentiality and instrumentality, like universal time itself in the form of totalities in perpetual disintegration.

Such then is the past of the world—made of homogeneous instants connected one with another by a purely external relation. By means of its Past, the For-itself finds itself in the In-itself. In the Past the For-itself, now become In-itself, is revealed as being in the midst of the world: it is; has lost its transcendence. And due to this fact its being is made past *in* time; there is no difference between the Past of the For-itself and the past of the world which was co-present with it except that the For-itself has to be its own past. Thus there is only one Past, which is the past of being or the objective Past in which I was. My past is past in the world, belonging to the totality of past being, which I am, which I flee. This means that there is a coincidence for one of the temporal dimensions between the ekstatic temporality which I have to be and the time of the world as a pure given nothingness. It is through the past that I belong to universal temporality; it is through the present and the future that I escape from it.

B. THE PRESENT

THE Present of the For-itself is presence to being, and as such it is *not*. But it is a revelation of being. The being which appears to Presence is given as *being in the Present*. That is why the present is given paradoxically as not being at the moment when it is experienced and as being the unique measure of Being in so far as it is revealed as being what it is in the Present. Not that being does not extend beyond the present, but this superabundance of being can be grasped only through the instrument of apprehension which is the Past—that is, as that which is no longer. Thus this book on my table is in the present and it was (identical with itself)

in the Past. Thus the Present is revealed through original temporality as universal being, and at the same time it is nothing—nothing more than being; it is a slipping-past alongside being, pure nothingness.

The preceding observations would seem to indicate that nothing comes from being to the present except its being. But this would be to forget that being is revealed to the For-itself either as immobile or as in motion, and that the two notions of motion and rest are in a dialectical relation. Now motion can not be derived ontologically from the nature of the For-itself nor from its fundamental relation to the In-itself, nor from what we can discover originally in the phenomenon of Being. A world without motion would be conceivable. To be sure, we can not imagine the possibility of a world without change, except by virtue of a purely formal possibility, but change is not motion. Change is alteration of the quality of the *this*; it is produced, as we have seen, in a block by the upsurge or disintegration of a form. Motion, on the contrary, supposes the permanence of the quiddity. If a *this* were to be transferred from one place to another and during this transfer were to undergo a radical alteration of its being, this alteration would negate the motion since there would no longer be anything which was in motion. Motion is pure change of place affecting a *this* which remains otherwise unaltered as is shown clearly enough by our assumption of the homogeneity of space. Since motion could not be deduced from any essential characteristic of existents in presence, it was denied by the Eleatic ontology; it compelled Descartes in his ontology to take refuge in the famous "snap of the finger." Motion has the exact value of a fact; it participates wholly in the complete contingency of being and must be accepted as a given. Of course we shall soon see that a For-itself is necessary in order for motion to exist; hence it is particularly difficult to designate exactly what in pure motion comes from being. But in any case there is no doubt that the For-itself here as elsewhere adds *nothing* to being. Here as elsewhere it is pure Nothing which provides the ground on which motion raises itself in relief. But while we are forbidden by the very nature of motion to deduce it, it is possible and even necessary for us to describe it. What then are we to conclude is the meaning of motion?

It is believed that motion is a simple affection of being because after the motion the moving body is discovered to be just as it was before. It has so often been posited as a principle that transfer does not distort the figure transferred that it has appeared evident that motion is added to being without modifying it. It is certain, as we have seen, that the quiddity of the "this" remains unaltered. Nothing is more typical of this conception than the resistance which has been encountered by a theory like that of Fitzgerald concerning "contraction," or like Einstein's concerning "the variations of mass," because they seem particularly to attack what makes the being of the moving body. Hence evidently comes the principle of the

relativity of motion, which is marvelously agreeable if the latter is an external characteristic of being and if no intra-structural modification determines it. Motion becomes then a relation so external to the being of its setting that it amounts to saying that being is in motion and its environment at rest or conversely that the environment is in motion and the being considered is at rest. From this point of view motion appears neither as a being nor as a mode of being but as an entirely desubstantialized relation.

But the fact that the moving body is identical with itself at departure and at arrival—i.e., in the two states which encompass motion—does not predetermine in any respect what it has been while it was *in motion*. It would amount to saying that the water which boils in an autoclave undergoes no transformation during the boiling, for the specious reason that it presents the same characteristics when it is cold at the start and when it is re-cooled. The fact that we can assign different successive positions to the moving body during its motion and that at each position it appears similar to itself should not deter us, for these positions define the space traversed and not motion itself. On the contrary, it is this mathematical tendency to treat the moving body as a being at rest that would change the length of a line without drawing it out of its state of rest; it is this tendency which is at the origin of the Eleatic paradoxes.

Thus the affirmation that being remains unchanged in its being, whether it be at rest or in motion, should appear to us as a simple postulate which we ought not to accept uncritically. In order to submit it to criticism let us return to the Eleatic arguments and in particular to the one concerning the arrow. The arrow, they tell us, when it passes by the position AB "is" there, exactly as if it were an arrow at rest, with the tip of its head on A and the tip of its tail on B. This appears evident if we admit that motion is superimposed on being and that consequently nothing comes to decide whether being is in motion or at rest. In a world, if motion is an accident of being, motion and rest are indistinguishable. The arguments which are usually opposed to the most famous of the Eleatic paradoxes, that of Achilles and the Tortoise, have no bearing here. What good is it to object that the Eleatics have reckoned on the infinite division of space without equally taking into account that of time? The question here concerns neither position nor the instant, but being. We approach a correct conception of the problem when we reply to the Eleatics that they have considered not motion but the space which supports motion. But we are not limiting ourselves to pointing out the question without resolving it. What must be the being of the moving body in order for its quiddity to remain unchanged while in its being the moving body is distinct from a being at rest?

If we try to clarify our objections to Zeno's arguments, we establish that they originate in a certain naive conception of motion. We admit that

the arrow "passes" at AB, but it does not seem to us that to pass a place is the equivalent of *remaining there*—i.e., of *being there*. Yet in this view we are guilty of serious confusion, for we consider that the moving object only passes AB (i.e., it never is there) and at the same time we continue to take for granted that in itself it is. Consequently the arrow simultaneously would be in itself and would not be at AB. This is the origin of the Eleatic Paradox: how could the arrow not be at AB since at AB it is? In other words in order to avoid the Eleatic paradox we must renounce the generally admitted postulate according to which being in motion preserves its being-in-itself. Merely to pass at AB is a being-of-passage. What does it mean to pass? It is simultaneously to be at a place and not to be there. At no moment can it be said that the being of the passage is here, without running the risk of abruptly stopping it there, but neither can it be said that it is not, or that it is not there, or that it is elsewhere. Its relation with the place is not a relation of occupation. But we have seen earlier that the location of a "this" at rest was its relation of exteriority to the ground inasmuch as this relation can collapse into a multiplicity of external relations with other "thises" when the ground itself disintegrates into a multiplicity of figures.⁴ The foundation of space is therefore the reciprocal exteriority which comes to being through the For-itself and whose origin is the fact that being is what it is. In a word it is being which defines its place by revealing itself to a For-itself as indifferent to other beings. This indifference is nothing but its very identity, its absence from ekstatic reality as it is apprehended by a For-itself which is already presence to other "thises."

By the very fact therefore that the *this* is what it is, it occupies a place, it is in a place—that is, it is put into relation by the For-itself with other *thises* as *having no relation with them*. Space is the nothingness of relation apprehended as relation by the being which is its own relation. The fact of *passing by* a place, instead of *being there*, can therefore be interpreted only in terms of being. This means that since place is founded by being, being is no longer sufficient to found its place. It merely outlines it; its relations of exteriority with other "thises" can not be established by the For-itself because the latter must establish those relations in terms of a "this" which is. However these relations could not be annihilated because the being in terms of which they are established is not a pure nothingness. The very "now" in which they are established is already exterior to them; that is, simultaneously with their revelation, there are already revealed new relations of exteriority of which the "this" considered is the foundation and which are externally related to the first. But this continuous exteriority of spatial relations which define the place of being can find its foundation only in the fact that the *this* considered is exterior to itself. In fact to say that the *this* passes by a place means that it is already

⁴ Ch. Three, section II.

no longer there when it is still there; that is, in relation to itself it is not in an ekstastic relation of being but in a pure relation of exteriority. Thus there is "place" in so far as the "this" is revealed as exterior to other "thises." And there is a passage at this place in so far as being is no longer caught up in this exteriority but on the contrary is already exterior to it. Thus motion is the being of a being which is exterior to itself. The only metaphysical question which is posited on the occasion of motion is that of exteriority to self. What should we understand by that?

In motion being changes into nothing when it passes from A to B. This means that its quality, in so far as it represents the being which is revealed as *this* to the For-itself, is not transformed into another quality. Motion is in no way similar to becoming; it does not change the essence of the quality; neither does it actualize the quality. The quality remains exactly what it is; but its mode of being is changed. This red ball which rolls on the billiard table does not cease to be red, but the ball is not this red which it is in the same way now as it was the red when at rest. The red remains suspended between abolition and permanence. In fact in so far as it is already at B, it is exterior to what it was at A and there is an annihilation of the red; but in so far as it rediscovers itself at C, beyond B, it is exterior to that very annihilation. Thus through abolition it escapes being, and through being it escapes abolition.

Therefore a category of "thises" is encountered in the world which have the peculiar property of never being without thereby becoming nothingnesses. The only relation which the For-itself can originally apprehend on these *thises* is the relation of exteriority to self. For since the exteriority is *nothing*, a being must exist which is to itself its own relation in order that there may be "exteriority to self." In short it is impossible for us to define in the pure terms of the In-itself what is revealed to a For-itself as exteriority-to-self. That exteriority can be discovered only by a being which is already to itself over *there* what it is *here*—that is, a consciousness. This exteriority-to-self, which appears as a pure disorder of being—that is, as the impossibility which exists for certain "thises" simultaneously to be themselves and to be their own nothingness—this must be indicated by something which exists as a *nothing in the world*; that is, as a substantiated nothing. Since exteriority-to-self is in no way ekstastic, the relation of the moving body to itself is a pure relation of indifference and can be revealed only to a witness. It is an abolition which can not be completed and an apparition which can not be completed. This nothing which measures and signifies exteriority-to-self is the trajectory, as the constitution of exteriority in the unity of a single being. The trajectory is the line which is described—that is, an abrupt appearance of synthetic unity in space, a counterfeit which collapses immediately into the infinite multiplicity of exteriority. When the *this* is at rest, space is: when it is in motion space is engendered or becomes. The

trajectory never is, since it is nothing; it vanishes immediately into purely external relations between different places; that is, in the simple exteriority of indifference or spatiality. Motion has no more of being; it is the least-being of a being which can neither arrive nor be abolished nor wholly be. Motion is the upsurge of the exteriority of indifference at the very heart of the in-itself. This pure vacillation of being is a contingent venture of being. The For-itself can apprehend it only across the temporal ekstasis and in an ekstastic permanent identification of the moving body with itself. This identification does not suppose any operation and in particular no "synthesis of recognition;" for the For-itself it is only the unity of ekstastic being of the Past with the Present. Thus the temporal identification of the moving body with itself across the constant positing of its own exteriority causes the trajectory to reveal itself—that is, to cause space to arise in the form of an evanescent becoming. By motion space is engendered in time; motion extends the line as traced from externality to self. The line vanishes at the same time as motion, and this phantom of the temporal unity of space is founded continuously in non-temporal space—that is, in the pure multiplicity of dispersion which is without becoming.

The For-itself in the present is presence to being. But the eternal identity of the permanent does not allow apprehending this presence as a reflection (*reflet*) on things since in permanence nothing comes to differentiate what is from what was. The present dimension of universal time would therefore be inapprehensible if there were no motion. It is motion which in the pure present determines universal time. First because universal time is revealed as present vacillation; already in the past it is no longer anything but an evanescent line, like the wake of a ship which fades away; in the future it is not at all, for it is unable to be its own project. It is like the steady progression of a lizard on the wall. Moreover its being has the inapprehensible ambiguity of the instant, for one could not say either that it is or that it is not; in addition it no sooner appears than it is already surpassed and exterior to itself.

Therefore universal time corresponds perfectly to the Present of the For-itself: the exteriority to self of the being which can neither be or not be returns to the For-itself an image—projected on the level of the In-itself—of a being which has to be what it is not and to not-be what it is. The whole difference lies in that which separates exteriority-to-self—where being is not in order to be its own exteriority, but "is to-be," rather, through the identification of an ekstastic witness—from the pure temporalizing ekstasis where being has to be what it is not. The For-itself makes its present known to itself through that which moves; it is its own present in simultaneity with actual motion; it is motion which will be charged with realizing universal time, in so far as the For-itself makes known to itself its own present through the present of the moving body. This realization will give importance to the reciprocal ex-

teriority of instants since the present of the moving body is defined—because of the very nature of motion—as exteriority to its own past and exteriority to that exteriority. The infinite division of time is founded in that absolute exteriority.

C. THE FUTURE

THE original future is the possibility of that presence which I have to be beyond the real to an in-itself which is beyond the real in-itself. My future involves as a future co-presence the outline of a future world, and as we have seen, it is this future world which is revealed to the For-itself which I will be; it is not the true possibilities of the For-itself, for only the reflective regard can know these. Since my possibles are the meaning of what I am and arise straightway as a beyond the in-itself to which I am presence, the future of the in-itself which is revealed to my future is in direct, strict connection with the real to which I am presence. The future of the in-itself is the present in-itself modified, for my future is nothing other than my possibilities of presence to an in-itself which I will have modified. Thus the future of the world is revealed to my future. It is made from the scale of possibilities which runs from simple permanence and the pure essence of the thing on up to potencies. As soon as I fix the essence of the thing, as soon as I apprehend it as table or inkwell, I am already there in the future: first because its essence can only be a co-presence to my further possibility of not-being-any-more-than-this-negation, and second because the permanence and the very instrumentality of the table or inkwell refer us to the future. We have sufficiently developed these observations in preceding sections so that we need not dwell on them here. What we wish to point out is only that everything, from the moment of its appearance as an instrumental-thing, immediately houses certain of its structures and properties in the future.

From the moment of the appearance of the world and of the “thises” there exists a universal future. Yet we have noted earlier that every future “state” of the world remains strange to it in the full reciprocal exteriority of indifference. There are certain futures in the world which are defined by chance and become autonomous probables, which are not probabilized but which are as probables, as fully constituted nows, with their content well determined but not yet realized. These futures belong to each “this” or collection of “thises,” but they are outside.

What then is the universal future? We must view it as the abstract context of that hierarchy of equivalents which are the futures, a container of reciprocal exteriorities which is itself exteriority, a sum of in-itselfs which is itself in-itself. That is, whatever may be the probable which is to prevail, there is and there will be a future. But due to this very fact, that future, indifferent and external to the present and composed of “nows,”

each one indifferent to the others and reunited by the substantiated relation of before-after (in so far as this relation, emptied of its ekstastic character has no longer anything but the meaning of an external negation)—this future is a series of empty containers reunited with one another in the unity of dispersion. In this sense the future sometimes appears as an urgency and a threat in so far as I strictly tie the future of a *this* to its present by the project of my own possibilities beyond the co-present. But sometimes this threat disintegrates into pure exteriority, and I no longer apprehend the future except under the aspect of a pure formal container, indifferent to what fills it and homogeneous with space, as a simple law of exteriority. And finally sometimes the future is discovered as a nothingness in-itself, inasmuch as it is pure dispersion beyond being.

Thus the temporal dimensions, across which the non-temporal *this* is given to us with its very a-temporality, assume new qualities when they appear on the object: being-in-itself, objectivity, the exteriority of indifference, absolute dispersion. Time, in so far as it is revealed to an ekstastic temporality which temporalizes itself, is everywhere a self-transcendence and a referring of the *before* to the *after* and of the *after* to the *before*. But this self-transcendence in so far as it causes itself to be apprehended on the in-itself, does not *have to be it*; it is *made-to-be* in it. The cohesion of Time is a pure phantom, the objective reflection (*reflet*) of the ekstastic project of the For-itself towards itself and the cohesion in motion of human Reality. But this cohesion has no *raison d'être*. If Time is considered by itself, it immediately dissolves into an absolute multiplicity of instants which considered separately lose all temporal nature and are reduced purely and simply to the total a-temporality of the *this*. Thus Time is pure nothingness in-itself, which can seem to have a being only by the very act in which the For-itself overleaps it in order to utilize it. This being, however, is that of a particular figure which is raised on the undifferentiated ground of time and which we call the *lapse* of time. In fact our first apprehension of objective time is practical: it is while being my possibilities beyond co-present being that I discover objective time as the worldly correlate of nothingness which separates me from my possible. From this point of view time appears as a finite, organized form in the heart of an indefinite dispersion. The *lapse* of time is the result of a compression of time at the heart of an absolute decompression, and it is the project of ourselves toward our possibilities which realizes the compression. This compression of time is certainly a form of dispersion and of separation, for it expresses in the world the distance which separates me from myself. But on the other hand, since I project myself toward a possible only across an organized series of dependent possibles which are what I have to be in order to —, and since their non-thematic and non-positional revelation is given in the non-positional revelation of the major possible toward which I project myself, time is revealed to me as an ob-

jective, temporal form, as an organized echeloning of probabilities. This objective form or *lapse* is like the trajectory of my act.

Thus time appears through trajectories. But just as spatial trajectories decompose and collapse into pure static spatiality, so the temporal trajectory collapses as soon as it is not simply lived as that which objectively implies our expectation of ourselves. In fact the probables which are revealed to me tend naturally to be isolated as in-itself probables and to occupy a strictly separated fraction of objective time. Then the *lapse* of time disappears, and time is revealed as the shimmer of nothingness on the surface of a strictly a-temporal being.

V. KNOWLEDGE

THIS rapid outline of the revelation of the world to the For-itself enables us now to form certain conclusions. We shall grant to idealism that the being of the For-itself is knowledge of being, but we must add that this knowledge has being. The identity of the being of the For-itself and of knowledge does not come from the fact that knowledge is the measure of being but from the fact that the For-itself makes known to itself what it is, through the in-itself; that is, from the fact that in its being it is a relation to being. Knowledge is nothing other than the presence of being to the For-itself, and the For-itself is only the nothing which realizes that presence. Thus knowledge is by nature ekstastic being, and because of that fact it is confused with the ekstastic being of the For-itself. The For-itself does not exist in order subsequently to know; neither can we say that it exists only in so far as it knows or is known, for this would be to make being vanish into an infinity regulated by particular bits of knowledge. Knowing is an absolute and primitive event; it is the absolute upsurge of the For-itself in the midst of being and beyond being, in terms of the being which it is not and as the negation of that being and a self nihilation. In a word, by a radical reversal of the idealist position, knowledge is reabsorbed in being. It is neither an attribute nor a function nor an accident of being; but there is only being. From this point of view it appears necessary to abandon the idealist position entirely, and in particular it becomes possible to hold that the relation of the For-itself to the In-itself is a fundamental ontological relation. At the end of this book we shall even be able to consider this articulation of the For-itself in relation to the In-itself as the perpetually moving outline of a quasi-totality which we can call Being. From the point of view of this totality the upsurge of the For-itself is not only the absolute event for the For-itself; it is also something which happens to the In-itself, the only possible adventure of the In-itself. In fact everything happens as if the For-itself by its very nihilation constituted itself as "consciousness of —"; that is, as if by its very transcendence it escaped that law of the In-itself in which the

affirmation is pasted over by the affirmed. The For-itself by its self-negation becomes the affirmation of the In-itself. The intentional affirmation is like the reverse of the internal negation; there can be affirmation only by a being which is its own nothingness and of a being which is not the affirming being. But then in the quasi-totality of Being, affirmation happens to the In-itself; it is the adventure of the In-itself to be affirmed. This affirmation which could not be effected as the affirmation of self by the In-itself without destroying its being-in-itself, happens to the In-itself as the affirmation is realized by the For-itself. The affirmation is like a passive ekstasis of the In-itself which leaves the in-itself unchanged yet which is achieved in the in-itself and from the standpoint of the in-itself. All this happens as if the For-itself had a Passion to lose itself in order that the affirmation "world" might come to the In-itself. Of course this affirmation exists only for the For-itself; it is the For-itself itself and disappears with it. But it is not in the For-itself, for it is an ekstasis. If the For-itself is one of its terms (the affirming), then the other term, the In-itself, is really present in it. The world which I discover exists outside on being.

To realism, on the other hand, we shall grant that it is being which is present to consciousness in knowledge and that the For-itself adds nothing to the In-itself except the very fact that there is In-itself; that is, the affirmative negation. Indeed we have undertaken the task of showing that the world and the instrumental-thing, space and quantity, and universal time are all pure hypostasized nothingnesses which in no way modify the pure being which is revealed through them. In this sense everything is given, everything is present to me without distance and in its complete reality. Nothing of what I see comes from me; there is nothing outside what I see or what I could see. Being is everywhere around me; it seems that I can touch it, grasp it; representation, as a psychic event, is a pure invention of philosophers. But from this being which "invests me" on every side and from which nothing separates me, I am separated precisely by nothing; and this nothing because it is nothingness is impassable. "There is" being because I am the negation of being, and worldliness, spatiality, quantity, instrumentality, temporality—all come into being only because I am the negation of being. These add nothing to being but are the pure, nihilated conditions of the "there is"; they only cause the "there is" to be realized. But these conditions which are nothing separate me more radically from being than prismatic distortions, across which I might still hope to discover being. To say that there is being is nothing, and yet it is to effect a total metamorphosis—since there is being only for a For-itself. It is not in its own quality that being is relative to the For-itself, nor in its being, and thereby we escape from Kantian relativism. Being is relative to the for-itself in its "being there" since the For-itself in its internal negation affirms what can not be affirmed, knows being such as it is when the "such as it is" can not belong to being. In this sense

the For-itself is immediate presence to being, and yet at the same time it slips in as an infinite distance between itself and being. This is because knowing has for its ideal being-what-one-knows and for its original structure not-being-what-is-known. Worldliness, spatiality, etc., only cause this not-being to be expressed. Thus I rediscover myself everywhere between myself and being as the nothing which is not being.

The world is human. We can see the very particular position of consciousness: being is everywhere, opposite me, around me; it weighs down on me, it besieges me, and I am perpetually referred from being to being; that table which is there is being and *nothing* more; that rock, that tree, that landscape—being and *nothing* else. I want to grasp this being and I no longer find anything but *myself*. This is because knowledge, intermediate between being and non-being, refers me to absolute being if I want to make knowledge subjective and refers me to myself when I think to grasp the absolute. The very meaning of knowledge is what it is not and is not what it is; for in order to know being such as it is, it would be necessary to be that being. But there is this “such as it is” only because I am not the being which I know; and if I should become it, then the “such as it is” would vanish and could no longer even be thought. We are not dealing here either with scepticism—which supposes precisely that the such as it is belongs to being—nor with relativism. Knowledge puts us in the presence of the absolute, and there is a truth of knowledge. But this truth, although releasing to us nothing more and nothing less than the absolute, remains strictly human.

Perhaps some may be surprised that we have treated the problem of knowing without raising the question of the body and the senses or even once referring to it. It is not my purpose to misunderstand or to ignore the role of the body. But what is important above all else, in ontology as elsewhere, is to observe strict order in discussion. Now the body, whatever may be its function, appears first as the *known*. We can not therefore refer knowledge back to it or discuss it before we have defined knowing, nor can we derive knowing in its fundamental structure from the body in any way or manner whatsoever. Furthermore the body—our body—has for its peculiar characteristic the fact that it is essentially that which is *known by the Other*. What I know is the body of another, and the essential facts which I know concerning my own body come from the way in which others see it. Thus the nature of *my* body refers me to the existence of others and to my being-for-others. I discover with it for human reality another mode of existence as fundamental as being-for-itself, and this I shall call being-for-others. If I want to describe in an exhaustive manner the relation of man to being, I must now attempt the study of this new structure of my being—the For-others. Within one and the same upsurge the being of human reality must be for-itself-for-others.